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DOHA (R) — Qatar's emir, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, said on Tuesday that Qatar was considering electing members of municipal councils, which would be the first vote by ballot in the country. The emir told the opening session of the country's advisory council that his administration was keen to increase citizens' involvement in government and economic development. "We are considering amendment of the laws relating to municipalities to have their membership by elections," he said. "If I have tended in my speech to you to concentrate on financial and economic issues as being the most urgent on our list of priorities... this does not at all mean negligence of other issues... such as upgrading the government system." Qatar's advisory council debates laws and makes recommendations to the cabinet. It now has 30 members, nominated by the emir from Qatari citizens and tribes. Laws in Qatar are enacted by emir decree. If the vote is decided, Qatar will become the second Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country to have the vote.

Qatar considering first municipal vote

AMMAN (AFP) — Armed Palestinians shot and wounded four residents in the West Bank town of Nablus on Tuesday in broad daylight, witnesses told AFP. In the first shooting 50-year-old lawyer Hossni Abu Rabah was bundled out of his office by a group of self-styled Fatah Hawks, the armed youth wing of the Fatah faction. He was taken to the main square and shot twice in the left leg. As he tried to escape, the Hawks fired again hitting passer-by Hussein Osama Ayad, 21, to the chest, witnesses said. Both were taken to the Rafidiya hospital where Abu Rabah was said to be in a comfortable condition and Mr. Ayad was good. In a separate shooting later Tuesday, shopkeeper Abed Al Karim Yaneesh, 62, received six bullets in both legs and the pelvis in an attack by Fatah Hawks in his shop in the Nablus bazaar. His son Majdi, 24, was shot in right thigh. Both were taken to Rafidiya hospital and were in a comfortable condition.

Shooting spree in Nablus; 4 injured

NABLUS (AFP) — Armed Palestinians shot and wounded four residents in the West Bank town of Nablus on Tuesday in broad daylight, witnesses told AFP. In the first shooting 50-year-old lawyer Hossni Abu Rabah was bundled out of his office by a group of self-styled Fatah Hawks, the armed youth wing of the Fatah faction. He was taken to the main square and shot twice in the left leg. As he tried to escape, the Hawks fired again hitting passer-by Hussein Osama Ayad, 21, to the chest, witnesses said. Both were taken to the Rafidiya hospital where Abu Rabah was said to be in a comfortable condition and Mr. Ayad was good. In a separate shooting later Tuesday, shopkeeper Abed Al Karim Yaneesh, 62, received six bullets in both legs and the pelvis in an attack by Fatah Hawks in his shop in the Nablus bazaar. His son Majdi, 24, was shot in right thigh. Both were taken to Rafidiya hospital and were in a comfortable condition.

Arabs to lobby against transfer of U.S. embassy

CAIRO (AFP) — The Arab League is to lobby the United Nations against the U.S. Congress vote to transfer the American embassy to Jerusalem, league chief Esmael Abdul Meguid said Tuesday. "Arab countries are going to launch intensive action within the United Nations to oppose this decision before Nov. 29, when the U.N. general assembly will begin its (annual) discussions on Jerusalem," Dr. Abdul Meguid told reporters. The diplomatic offensive will be conducted by Arab members of the U.N. Security Council, members of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and the Organisation of African Unity, and non-aligned countries.

30 settlers held for public disorder

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Some 30 Israeli settlers have been charged with taking part in illegal demonstrations and public order offences, a justice ministry spokesman said as they faced the courts on Monday and Tuesday, he said. They are accused of disrupting public order and attacking the issues. A quarter-centuries old movement, including Rabbi Moshe Levinger from Hebron, the founder of the ultra-nationalist movement, "Bloc of Faith," and Nadia Matar, the leader of the "Women in Green" as well as the militants from the anti-Arab Kach movement. All were arrested during demonstrations against the Israeli military redeployment, but were released on bail. None are behind bars. Officially the cases are not linked to the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a Jewish fanatic on Nov. 4.

Court clears way for Priebe extradition

BUENOS AIRES (R) — Argentina's top court on Tuesday rejected the last legal bid by former SS Captain John Lennon to block his extradition to Italy. The supreme court, in a brief written ruling, dismissed an attempt by Mr. Priebe's attorney to annul his decision two weeks ago to send Priebe to Italy to be tried for crimes against humanity. "The request completely," the court said. Mr. Priebe, 82, wanted for the massacre of 335 men and boys at the ardeatine caves outside Rome in March 1944. The victims, 75 of whom were Jews, were bound and gagged in the back of the truck. Many were members of the Italian resistance.

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Four in the race for presidency in Algeria elections

Agence France Presse

ALGERIAN PRESIDENT Liamine Zeroual, an austere and reserved retired general, is seeking election on Thursday in his country's first multi-party presidential poll since independence in 1962.

Mr. Zeroual, appointed president in January last year, is the hot favourite to win a campaign dominated by each of the four candidates' plans to end the civil war that has left between 30,000 and 50,000 dead since it began in 1992.

The incumbent, 54, who has swung between seeking reconciliation and confrontation with the country's armed Islamic opposition, has presented himself as an independent candidate in the run-up to the first round of voting.

He is backed, however, by military hardliners who brought in a state of emergency after quashing the second round of an election that the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win in January 1992.

Named as president for a transition period of three years on January 30, 1994 by the military-backed High Council of State, he pledged in October last year to hold elections by the end of this year.

Mr. Zeroual has said he hopes the presidential race, and legislative and municipal elections due to follow, will be a break with the past that will allow a new generation of leaders to come to power in Algeria.

His chances of victory have been enhanced but his hopes of national reconciliation dented by a boycott of the poll by the main Islamic opposition parties allied to the banned FIS.

Born in Batna in the Aurès mountains, Mr. Zeroual is a "pure" product of the Algerian military. He began his career as a soldier serving in the National Liberation Army (ALN) fighting to evict the colonial power France between 1954 and 1962.

Long a supporter of a professional army, he commanded three military regiments during his long career: Tamanrasset in the south in 1982, Bechar on the Moroccan border in 1984, and Constantine in the east in 1987.

Nahnah — moderate face

Mahfoud Nahnah, leader of Islamic Society Movement (MSI-HAMAS), is the candidate whose politics are closest to those of the FIS.

Mr. Nahnah, 53, a former Arabic language teacher, is the moderate face of Algerian Islamic extremism.

He sees the presidential election as a chance to stop the "spiral of violence and hatred" that has left more than 30,000 dead since 1992.

The MSI-HAMAS, which recruits among the middle class, is the second most important fundamentalist party after the FIS but only polled 4.71 per cent in the first round of the quashed December 1991 legislative elections.

Sheikh Nahnah believes in a modern and tolerant Islam and a positive coexist-

ence between all political movements but has vowed not to sit down at the conference table with "those who come with a Khalashnikov."

Armed militants have threatened to kill him but he is equally mistrusted by more moderate politicians who have accused him of wanting the same objective ultimately as the FIS: a hardline Islamic state.

'Act of resistance'

Said Sadi, leader of the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD), has described his candidature as an act of resistance.

The 48-year-old psychiatrist is the most secular of all the candidates and the one most hostile to Islamic extremism, whose exponents, he has said, oppose democracy and should be excluded from it.

Mr. Sadi has led his party since 1989 but has been in politics much longer. He was one of the main leaders of the militant movement that campaigned for improved rights for the country's Berbers between 1960 and 1970.

Since then he has become a leader of the "democratic movement" and has denounced the former one-party state "33 years of waste" followed by "an unspeakable fundamentalist barbarism."

Born in Aghrib in the Kabylie mountains, he was one of those who called for the cancellation of the second round of voting in the legislative elections in January 1992.

Mr. Sadi, who also chairs the Movement for the Republic (MPR), has called for the creation of self-defence groups to oppose Muslim militants.

The RCD won 2.56 per cent of the vote in the first round of the legislative election in December 1991.

'Worst' candidate

Noureddine Boukrouh, leader of the Algerian Renaissance Party (PRA), is the youngest candidate and is widely regarded as the clear outsider in the presidential election.

Mr. Boukrouh, 45, has presented himself as the candidate of reconstruction and reconciliation, but is perhaps best remembered for calling himself "the least worst" of the four presidential hopefuls.

Born in Al Milia in eastern Algeria, he is a former civil servant who became a manager of national enterprises that were privatised, going on to run a biological products manufacturing company.

A father of five and an army reserve officer, he has declared himself a disciple of Malek Bennabi's philosophy of Algerian nationalism founded on a modern and progressive Islam.

Mr. Boukrouh wrote a celebrated attack on the bureaucrats and remnant class of the former one-party state and has since concentrated on campaigning against armed militants using violence to try to bring down the antiquities police.

The artifacts were handed over to the Supreme Antiquities Council for examination, the paper said.

Liman Al Turah, which also holds prisoners involved in militant violence, is built near Misr Al Qadima, the original site where Cairo was built over a millennium ago.



An Algerian woman signs up for her voter card in an Algiers neighbourhood said to be a stronghold of militants who oppose the Nov. 16 presidential elections (AFP photo)

Precious artefacts found in Egyptian prison

CAIRO (AFP) — A trove of priceless ancient artefacts was discovered in a cell block housing hardcore murderers and thieves at one of Egypt's highest security prisons, the daily Al Ahram said.

The pieces from Egypt's pharaonic, Greco-Roman and Islamic eras had sat for years at the entrance of cell block two in Liman Al Turah prison until they were noticed by a prison inspector, the daily said.

Prisoners digging the foundations for a reception for the prison, south of Cairo, unearthed them and, not realising their value, set them aside on officials said, the paper reported in its early edition for Tuesday.

Cell block two houses prisoners serving long terms for murder or theft, the paper added.

The pieces included a trio of stone statues dating back to the pharaonic Ancient Empire, the top of a Greek column, two Greek vases carved with depictions of Greek myths and an undated statuette of a nude woman.

Also among them was a stone bust of Mamluk noble, most probably Ali Bek Al Kabir, and a prayer podium, most probably from the Ben Tulun Mosque, one of Cairo's oldest mosques dating back to 879 AD.

The inspector, Sayed Abdul Halim, told the paper he recognised the pieces might be valuable because he had once worked in the antiquities police.

The artifacts were handed over to the Supreme Antiquities Council for examination, the paper said.

Liman Al Turah, which also holds prisoners involved in militant violence, is built near Misr Al Qadima, the original site where Cairo was built over a millennium ago.

Israel may compensate Egypt for PoW massacres — official

CAIRO (Agencies) — Israel has told Egypt it will look into reports that Israeli army officers executed Egyptian prisoners of war (PoWs) in the Arab-Israeli wars of 1956 and 1967 and has said it is ready to compensate for the deaths, an Egyptian official said.

Adel Al Safti, first deputy foreign minister, said in the government newspaper Al Abaro on Tuesday that Egypt would never allow the issue to go unresoled.

Former Israeli officers and historians shocked Egyptians when they revealed earlier this year that they either witnessed or took part in the execution of Egypt PoWs during the two wars.

The two countries failed to end the dispute in a meeting in Cairo in September but Mr. Safti said contacts had continued and that Egyptian and Israeli officials discussed the issue during the Middle East and North Africa economic summit in Amman in October.

The opposition has also so far the issue to back their stand against peace and normalisation with the Jewish state.

Egypt became the first Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel in 1979 but relations at the popular level remain cold.

Mr. Safti said his country was ready to investigate Israeli allegations that Egyptian troops committed crimes on the other side of the battle lines during the 1973 war if Israel presented proof.

"Let us hope that will not take a long time. All I can say is Egypt will not forget this issue and will continue to bring it up until we find an acceptable resolution," he said.

Islamists and leftist opposition groups in Egypt have pressed the government to cut relations with Israel over the PoW allegations and have criticised the state for not taking enough action against Israel.

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Nigeria gets no respite in row over executions

LAGOS (R) — Nigeria remained under siege Tuesday from the international community over its execution of nine minority rights activists including author Ken Saro-Wiwa.

More countries continued to recall their top diplomats from Lagos, the latest being Brazil and fellow OPEC member Venezuela, to protest at the hanging last Friday of the activists.

In tit-for-tat retaliation, Nigeria Monday recalled its ambassadors from abroad for similar action by many countries, including the United States and former colonial power Britain.

Saro-Wiwa and his associates were members of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni Peoples (MOSOP) and were sentenced over the murder of four chiefs in oil-producing Ogoniland.

Their execution drew worldwide anger and Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth.

Russian shelling kills 2 in Chechenya

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian forces killed two Chechen civilians and wounded three others during shelling of rebel-held areas of the breakaway republic, Interfax News Agency reported Tuesday, citing Chechen separatists.

Russian forces fired shells and rockets at the rebel-held villages of Achkhoy Martan, Orenkovo and Stary Achkhoy in western Chechenya, said officials loyal to Chechen independence leader Dzhokhar Dudayev.

They charged Russian forces had opened fire 49 times in the past 24 hours.

The villages of Dargo and Benoi in the southeastern district of Vedeno also came under fire, the officials said, adding that Russian helicopter gunships carried out four attacks in the Achkhoy Martan and Shali areas.

There was no independent confirmation of the casualty figures.

Meanwhile a Russian soldier was killed in the Chechen capital Grozny overnight Monday during a

which groups Britain and its former colonies.

In a statement from the capital Abuja Monday night, Nigeria's government said the suspension was at variance with the facts of the matter which led to it.

"Government is studying the full decisions of the Commonwealth heads of government and will respond appropriately in accordance with our national aspirations, interest, dignity and self-respect," said the statement issued by David Attah, the spokesman of military ruler General Sani Abacha.

"The government and people of Nigeria will patriotically confront this challenge to the course we have charted, for the full and unimpeded realisation of the programme."

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, has been in turmoil since 1993 when the army annulled the vote to restore democracy. Gen.

Abacha seized power in the anarchy that followed the annulment.

Last month, he announced a three-year transition programme for a return to civilian rule. The Commonwealth has demanded that he shows convincing evidence of restoring democracy within the next two years or Nigeria would be expelled from the association.

More trouble loomed for the west African nation Tuesday over the executions as the European Union scheduled an emergency session of its executive to discuss stronger sanctions against Nigeria.

Pressure groups and leading world figures like Archbishop Desmond Tutu continued to call for an embargo on Nigeria's crude oil, its economic backbone but this did not seem likely.

Saro-Wiwa had led a campaign for self-determination for the 500,000-strong

Ogoni ethnic minority and to gain compensation from oil firms for environmental damage to their homeland by foreign oil companies since 1954.

The West had objected to the trial of the men by a special tribunal. But Nigeria countered that this procedure was not new.

Justice Minister and Attorney-General Michael Aghamuche said on state television that the West was applying double standards by demanding the death penalty for drug-related offences while condemning the death sentences on the Ogoni activists.

State television Monday also reported demonstrations it said had taken place in Akwa Ibom state in the south, Abuja and Niger state in the north in support of Gen. Abacha's government.



French Prime Minister Alain Juppé gestures during the opening of a parliament debate on cutting France's huge welfare deficit (AFP photo)

French demonstrate against Juppé reforms

PARIS (AFP) — French workers planned nationwide demonstrations Tuesday to defend the debt-ridden social security system as Prime Minister Alain Juppé's plan to reform it came under fire from leaders of his conservative coalition.

As Juppé prepared to put the plan, full details of which have yet to be revealed, to a parliamentary vote of confidence Wednesday, the prime minister came under criticism from former Prime Minister Edouard Balladur and leaders of the defeated presidential candidate.

Trade unions went ahead with the day of action despite receiving assurances from Labour and Social Affairs Minister Jacques Barrot during talks over the weekend that some drastic measures had been dropped.

These included a non-reimbursable special prescription charge and a reform of civil servants' pension system.

A new tax to finance the social security system's accumulated debt of 230 billion francs (\$46 billion) was believed to have been reduced in size and spread over a longer period.

Force Ouvrière called Monday for a 24-hour general strike on Nov. 28 to protest the reforms and was expected to be joined by the Communist-led CGT union and probably by the pro-Socialist CFDT.

A strike call in the Paris Metro caused uneven disruption with 75 per cent of services being provided, but the railway system was unaffected. The Eiffel Tower opened late to visitors after a one-hour strike by staff.

Ferry sailings to the Mediterranean Island of Corsica and local train and

bus services were disrupted in Marseille although high-speed TGV trains ran normally.

There were some delays in flights at several airports, including Orly, south of Paris, after management reduced air control capacity as a precaution. But air controllers worked harder and the delays were expected to be made up.

"We must proceed ... not by continually increasing taxes, but by bringing expenditure under control and refusing all new expenses which are not financed," he said in an opinion piece in the daily *Le Monde*.

Speaking in the debate Monday, Mr. Balladur's former budget minister and campaign spokesman, Nicolas Sarkozy, warned of the "risk of halting growth" if a new tax was created.

Another Balladur supporter, neo-Gaullist Deputy Philippe Aubert, warned Tuesday against "costly new benefits," referring to a dependent persons' allowance that has been promised by Mr. Juppé.

The allowance, if it is voted by parliament, will be one of the few presidential campaign promises made by President Jacques Chirac to have been kept.

Reduction of public deficits has been set as a top priority by Mr. Chirac. Deficits must be reduced to three percent of GNP to qualify for the single European currency in 1999.

China stresses vigilance against Japan

SEOUL (R) — Chinese President Jiang Zemin warned against a resurgence of Japanese militarism in South Korea last month by saying a 1910 annexation treaty which began 35 years of Japanese colonial rule over the then united Korean peninsula was signed in a technically legal way. He later amended his remarks.

Wading into a row between Korea and Japan, Mr. Jiang told a joint news conference with Mr. Kim: "We must be vigilant against a Japanese militarist minority."

"Although half a century has passed since the end of a war between China and Japan, some Japanese politicians still have a wrong historical view," Mr. Jiang said. "Japan should have a correct view of history."

"The key problem is whether Japan recognises that the war was an act of aggression," he said, adding that Beijing wants to improve ties with Tokyo.

Mr. Jiang's comments followed a 1 1/2 hour meeting with Mr. Kim that touched on the Japan-Korea row, which at one point threatened a summit between Mr. Kim and Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum in Osaka.

Barricades were set up at the entrance of Gonaville and residents were seen rounding up former army supporters and tying them up before handing them over to police.

Mr. Kim told the news conference: "We will correct Japan's bad habits".

Mr. Murayama sparked fury in South Korea last month by saying a 1910 annexation treaty which began 35 years of Japanese colonial rule over the then united Korean peninsula was signed in a technically legal way. He later amended his remarks.

Japanese cabinet Minister Takumi Eto rubbed salt into the wound by saying Japan did "good things" under colonialism. Mr. Eto resigned Monday, salvaging the Osaka summit.

Mr. Kim noted Japanese leaders had made similarly offensive remarks on about 30 occasions since the end of colonial rule.

"We will show them that our government is different from past military-backed governments," said Mr. Kim, who was elected as Seoul's first civilian head of state in three decades in 1992.

The comments by Mr. Jiang and Mr. Kim underline uneasiness in a number of Asian capitals over Japan's efforts to play a greater leadership role in the region. Tokyo's hosting of the APEC meeting is a part of that effort.

South Korea and China both suffered the horrors of Japanese military occupation and their relations with Tokyo are still bedevilled

by Japan's wartime past. Mr. Jiang arrived Monday accompanied by Foreign Minister Qian Qichen and other senior Chinese leaders. Diplomats see the visit as signifying Beijing's new intimacy with Seoul and its cooling towards Pyongyang.

Mr. Jiang, the first Chinese president ever to visit South Korea, told reporters his talks with Mr. Kim were "friendly and serious" and the two agreed on many bilateral issues.

"I am satisfied with the results of the meeting," he said.

Mr. Kim said the two leaders agreed a peace treaty to conclude formally the 1950-53 fratricidal Korean War should be worked out between the two Koreas and in the meantime an armistice treaty should remain in force.

Pyongyang, Beijing's traditional Communist ally, is pressing for a peace accord with Washington to replace the armistice treaty. Its goal is apparently to drive a wedge between Seoul and its main ally, the United States.

Korean businesses have poured several billion dollars into China since 1992, and Mr. Kim said the leaders agreed to boost this further and concentrate in particular on aerospace development and nuclear energy.

Early official returns show Arzu leading Guatemala vote

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) — Conservative businessman Alvaro Arzu took a big lead in first official returns from Guatemala's presidential election, but it was unclear late Sunday whether he could claim victory without a runoff.

Early results indicated turnout may have been less than 30 per cent in Guatemala's third civilian presidential election in 10 years, despite a truce called

by rebels eager to work with a new government to end three decades of fighting.

Mr. Arzu, a popular former mayor of Guatemala City and former foreign minister, had been the clear front-runner in a field of 19 candidates.

Official returns from 174 of the country's 6,348 precincts showed Mr. Arzu with 25,096 votes or 61.05 per cent against 7,104 votes

or 17.4 per cent for his nearest challenger, Alfonso Portillo, election authorities reported.

The only leftist party taking part, the new Guatemalan Democratic Front led by candidate Jorge González Del Valle, had 2,740 votes or 6.07 per cent for a surprisingly strong third in the preliminary results.

The returns were all from the capital. Mr. Arzu's power base.

Mr. Arzu, of the National Advanced Party, must receive more than half the votes to win outright, or he faces a runoff with his nearest rival on Jan. 7. The winner will be sworn in on Jan. 14, Mr. Arzu's 50th birthday, for a four-year term.

Guatemalans also were electing a vice president. 80 members of the National Legislature, 300 mayors and 20 members of the Central

American Parliament.

Pre-election polls had shown Mr. Arzu with about double the support of Mr. Portillo, a former congressman of the Guatemalan Republican Front.

Only an hour after the polls closed, telephone operators at Mr. Arzu's National Advanced Party were answering the phones with a cheerful "winning party, how can I help you?" Voting passed with no

incidents reported. Final official results weren't expected until midweek.

In addition to making peace with the rebels, the next president will be expected to reduce the political power of Guatemala's military, revive a sluggish economy and combat rampant corruption and high crime.

As a goodwill gesture, leftist National Revolution-

1st Beatles single for 25 years under guard

LONDON (R) — The Beatles' first single recording for 25 years is being kept under armed guard abroad until its worldwide release on Dec. 4, their record company said in London. Beatlemania looks set for a revival now that the three surviving Beatles have come together to record *Free As A Bird*, a John Lennon song that Lennon put on tape three years before he was killed by a gunman outside his New York apartment in 1980. Lennon's widow, Yoko Ono, gave a tape of the unfinished song to Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr, who returned to the recording studio for the first time in a quarter of a century to recreate the sound of the world's most famous group.

Seed comes to life after 1,200-year wait

LOS ANGELES (R) — Scientists studying the origins of life have germinated the oldest known seed ever found, a 1,200-year-old lotus seed from China, they reported. "A little seed that slept for more than 1,000 years sprouted in four days just like its modern sibling," said plant physiologist Jane Sherrill Miller of the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). In addition to the 1,200-year-old seed, three other ancient lotus seeds were germinated by the UCLA team and dated by radiocarbon techniques. One was more than 600 years old and another more than 300, the age of the fourth was not known.

There's life beyond Cheers for Kirstie Alley

BEVERLY HILLS, California (R) — As far as Kirstie Alley is concerned, you can forget about any on-screen reunions of the classic television comedy *Cheers*. "God, I hope not, I hate reunions," exclaimed the actress who played the manager of America's favorite bar for six years. Scolding a reporter for even suggesting such a thing, she said: "What are you reuniting? To me a reunion show of any kind is so everyone can go 'oh, look at him, he's bald,' and 'look at her... it's a comparison of physical attributes.' Art cannot be recreated, she says. "They (shows) stand on their own... It is what it was, like 'goodbye, let it go.'

Four Weddings And A Funeral keeps F-word

LONDON (R) — An amorous campaigner has called for a ban on the first British television screening of the hit movie *Four Weddings And A Funeral* because Hugh Grant swears in it — but the channel has refused to back down and bleep him. "In the first three minutes there is nothing but a stream of F-words and that cannot be justified," media 'clean-up' campaigner Mary Whitehouse said.

Mexican election campaign sours over chocolate

MORELIA, Mexico (R) — In a potential election scandal quickly dubbed "operation bonbon", Mexico's ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) was accused of handing out boxes of chocolates to woo voters. Leftist leaders of the opposition Democratic Revolution Party (PRD) claimed PRI officials caught red-handed in a poor suburb in southern Morelia. The candidates had a greeting card attached from a PRI local congressional candidate.



Some crew members of the space shuttle Atlantis — pilot Jim Halsall (left), Canadian Chris Hadfield (centre) and Commander Ken Cameron — answer questions for the Canadian press during a video link from the aft flight deck (AP photo)

Shuttle installs docking tunnel for Mir rendezvous

WASHINGTON (AP) — The five astronauts aboard the U.S. space shuttle Atlantis installed a five-metre (15-foot) docking tunnel to the spacecraft early Friday that will be used in its linkup with the Russian Mir space station Wednesday.

"A little seed or more has sprouted in like its mode," said plant

James A. Sherrill, University of Los Angeles, addition to the seed, three

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— Mexico (R) — election, dubbed 'bonbon'. Inaugural Revolutionary D) showed

cases full which they caught red

The caning card PRI local candidate.

— The Constitutional Court still has to rule on complaints over a rule demanding parties win more than five per cent of the vote before they can win seats by proportional representation.

Earlier Tuesday President Yeltsin, looking well in his second public appearance since suffering the mild heart attack, said he was in complete control of Russia's foreign policy. "The recovery will be complete," he added.

Court judges were due to meet Tuesday to decide

the new docking station will allow for easier linkups and access between ships when construction begins on an international space station, space agency officials say. Five other docking missions are planned by 1997.

The shuttle, carrying four U.S. astronauts and a Canadian, blasted off Sunday on an eight-day mission in the next big step toward building an international outpost in space.

The first joining of a U.S. space shuttle with Mir came last July. Atlantis is scheduled to detach from Mir

Saturday. The Atlantis-Mir mission is also an unprecedented gathering in space of astronauts of four different nationalities — US, Canadian, Russian, and German.

In addition to the docking tunnel, Atlantis will also deliver to Mir water and other materials, as well as Hubble.

They will meet up in space with Mir crew members Yuri Gidzenko and Sergei Avdeyev, both Russians, and Thomas Reiter, a German astronaut from the European Space Agency.

U.N.: Tens of thousands of species doomed to vanish

WASHINGTON (R) — Human behaviour is condemning tens of thousands of plants and animals to extinction, scientists from 50 countries said Tuesday in a report meant to spur nations into protecting biodiversity.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) said in its global diversity assessment, prepared for an international biodiversity conference in Indonesia, that the world had 13 million to 14 million species. This was the most accurate estimate to date, it said.

Of that total, just 13 per cent or about 1.75 million species have been scientifically described. Potential uses of species for food, medicine and to sustain ecosystems are largely unknown, the assessment said.

Because of loss or conversion of wildlife habitat worldwide, it said, tens of thousands of species were sure to vanish with no possible action to prevent it.

"The reason for doing the report was for the first time ever to get more than a thousand of the world's best known scientists to speak with one voice to influence policymakers in Jakarta to take effective action," said R.T. Watson, project chairman and an associate director at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

"The goal ... was to assess the importance of biodiversity to humankind and point out how we are losing biodiversity at a truly alarming rate," Mr. Watson told Reuters.

Flowering plants and vertebrate animals are disappearing at 50 to 100 times the average expected natural rate, the report said. At least 5,400 animals and 4,000 plants of the catalogued species faced extinction, it added.

Over the next 25 years, tropical forests could lose species at 1,000 to 10,000 times the natural rate. Even if some threatened species survive, the report said, many would lose distinct populations or genetic differences.

Yeltsin holds talks in hospital with Kazakh leader

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin, recovering in hospital from a mild heart attack, met Kazakh leader Nursultan Nazarbayev Tuesday — his first talks with a foreign leader since falling ill almost three weeks ago.

Interfax News Agency said the meeting at Moscow's Central Clinical Hospital was likely to be more than just a courtesy call by Mr. Nazarbayev. Kremlin aides say Mr. Yeltsin is resuming a normal work schedule.

The 64-year-old leader was also due to resume regular weekly meetings with Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin Tuesday.

The two were likely to discuss the uncertainty surrounding a Dec. 17 parliamentary election, thrown into doubt by a constitutional challenge to the electoral law.

Interfax quoted Kazakh officials as saying the meeting with Mr. Nazarbayev was of a personal nature but could also cover Russian-Kazakh relations, economic integration and questions concerning the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Kazakh presidential spokesman Daulat Kazyayev said Monday the meeting was mainly a courtesy call.

"The president sees it as his duty to visit President Yeltsin, who is a personal friend and close colleague and wish him a speedy recovery," Mr. Kazyayev told Reuters.

The meeting was another sign of Mr. Yeltsin regaining strength after being rushed to hospital on Oct. 26 following his second mild heart attack in less than four months.

Mr. Yeltsin has been holding daily meetings with ministers and advisers, discussed parliamentary and presidential elections Monday with top political aide Georgy Satarov.

The president insisted elections to the State Duma lower house must go ahead despite concerns about the electoral law, saying legislation should be amended in time to avoid any challenge to the outcome of the poll.

Mr. Satarov, interviewed by NTV independent television, quoted Mr. Yeltsin as saying it would be "indecem" to cancel the vote. The Constitutional Court still has to rule on complaints over a rule demanding parties win more than five per cent of the vote before they can win seats by proportional representation.

Earlier Tuesday President Yeltsin, looking well in his second public appearance since suffering the mild heart attack, said he was in complete control of Russia's foreign policy. "The recovery will be complete," he added.

Foreign medical assistance was not necessary, he said, adding that Russian doctors and medicine could cope. "The recovery will be complete," he added.

Sri Lanka troops capture key Tiger base in Jaffna

VAVUNIYA, Sri Lanka (R)

— Sri Lankan forces have captured the main political headquarters of the Tamil Tigers on the outskirts of the guerrilla stronghold of Jaffna, civilians arriving in the northern town of Vavuniya said Tuesday.

Tamil residents from Jaffna told Reuters in the government-held frontline town of Vavuniya that the army has captured the Kondavil-based headquarters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), five kilometres north of Jaffna town.

Travellers from Jaffna said that the fall of Kondavil was likely to be a major setback for the Tigers, who also lost a large training camp to advancing troops Monday in the suburb of Urumpirai, about five kilometres northeast of Jaffna City.

The claim prompted a swift denial from the army.

A military spokesman said troops, beating back the Tigers from the Valikamam east, Urumpirai and Kopai north areas — between two and five kilometres north and northwest of Jaffna City — have left civilian property intact.

"It is totally false. We have not destroyed civilian property," the spokesman told Reuters Tuesday.

Recent army pictures released to the media show

troops consolidating themselves in freshly captured areas north and northwest of Jaffna City.

Troops Monday pushed farther south of Urumpirai and Kopai where they overran a huge underground complex and arms depot, among the last lines of the rebels' defence of Jaffna.

The LTTE, who are fighting for a Tamil homeland in the north and east of Sri Lanka, have been running a virtual mini state in Jaffna for nearly a decade. More than 50,000 people have died in the 12-year war.

On Tuesday, the army kept everyone guessing on the timing of its long-awaited final push into Jaffna City, which aid-workers and analysts said was possible any day.

The combat is coming very close to the safety zone (in Jaffna City), a Western relief worker told Reuters.

"It is going to be critical in the days to come."

The Tigers, fighting a fierce rearguard action to defend Jaffna City, have lost more than 250 members since the army resumed their advance last Friday after a two-week lull, military sources said. Nearly 60 soldiers were killed, they said.

Reuters in Geneva.

"It's not new. We've suspected it for a long time, but with an empty town the risk of a major confrontation for Jaffna town cannot be excluded," Mr. Alther said.

But the military spokesman refused to confirm a possible "final push".

"We can still dominate the (northern Jaffna) peninsula without capturing Jaffna," the spokesman said. "The ground commanders will decide when the time is right to capture Jaffna."

Aid workers said they believed 100,000 Tamils had already fled south across the Jaffna Lagoon to Kilinochchi and at least 200,000 had taken refuge in Chavakachcheri, east of Jaffna City.

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Gramm, Dole throw mud in presidential race

WASHINGTON (R) — The Republican presidential race has suddenly turned nasty, with Senate majority leader Bob Dole saying Texas Senator Phil Gramm was like "a bug that keeps crawling around" even after being squished.

In an interview with Time magazine published Monday, Sen. Dole said of Sen. Gramm: "I've told Phil that we've got lot to do around here (in the Senate) and that we ought to cool down. I'm all for burying the hatchet. In him."

Sen. Dole, who leads the Republican presidential field in most polls by 20 percentage points or more, quickly added he was "just joking" but went on to accuse Sen. Gramm of constantly trying to get the better of him in the Senate.

Officials said they did not know exactly how many trekkers, guides and porters had been trapped in the mountains by freezing cold weather, deep snow and avalanches.

On Monday, eight helicopters ferried survivors from the Gokyo Valley in the Everest region, Manang in mid-west Nepal and Langtang in central Nepal, Mr. Shrestha said.

On Monday, eight helicopters plucked 237 people, including 111 foreigners registered in the three weeks to Nov. 8 for trekking expeditions.

About 2,700 said they planned to go to the Everest region, while 3,200 were headed to Annapurna area and another 300 to the Kanchenjunga region.

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Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:
MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:
Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.
Telephones: 684-311, 6996-34
Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO
Facsimile: 696183

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Back to basics

JORDAN AND BAHRAIN, the small but vibrant Emirate on the Arabian Gulf, are on the threshold of entering a new era in their bilateral relations following the successful visit of Crown Prince Hassan a couple of days ago. The historically strong ties that existed between the two countries before 1990 inevitably suffered some strains during the Gulf crisis and war. Now, however, the door is open not only to reestablish those old ties but also to forge new links on grounds that can withstand the test of time.

The Crown Prince spent the best part of his visit, short as it was, discussing with Bahraini leaders just what these grounds might be, in the overall context of regional politics and the Arab World in particular. The picture that emerged was clear: The Arabs cannot afford to repeat mistakes of the past; divisions within the Arab camp have led to its weakness and vulnerability and as such they have to be rectified through joint efforts; smaller countries like Jordan and Bahrain had to bear the major brunt of conflicts that were fomented elsewhere; the security of the region cannot be served by exhausting resources or arms building without paying due attention to infrastructural needs, which cost infinitely less funds to satisfy; terrorism and interference in the internal affairs of other countries have to be fought by solid and coordinated action by all states of the region, just as much as stability can be enhanced by respect for democratic and human rights throughout the area.

The Jordanian-Bahraini talks seem to have succeeded not only because the two sides reached a shared analysis of what went wrong, without going into unnecessary details, but also because Jordan and Bahrain emerged with a common vision on what needed to be done and pledged to work together in drawing a framework for materialising this vision. Bahrain would work in its own sphere to speed up the process of Arab reconciliation, while Jordan do what it could in contributing to regional peace and prosperity. Through setting up joint bodies and institutionalising joint work, the two countries could serve as a bridge towards ensuring mutual interests, reaching common goals and strengthening humanitarian causes.

It is heartening to note that the Jordanian and Bahraini leaders did not overlook the need to go beyond regional politics and strive together towards serving world peace, security and globalism. The Arabs have a role to play in opening up to the rest of the world and in consolidating international understanding, beginning where all efforts should start, at home and within the region.

Jordan, and Bahrain, following the Crown Prince's visit to Manama, can draw comfort from the fact that they have not waited in vain for the moment when the Arab World could start closing ranks again, this time hopefully on more solid and enduring basis.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

MAHMOUD RIMAWI, addressed the 60th birthday of His Majesty King Hussein, saying that Jordanians today recall the struggle of the Kingdom under King Hussein and the numerous achievements realised under his reign. From a small country with meagre resources, Jordan has been transformed over the past few decades into modern state; and with little means available to the Jordanian people Jordan has been able to accomplish a great deal in social, economic and political domains thanks to the King's wise leadership, said the writer. Jordanians have reason to be proud of their Kingdom and their leader; and the King's 60th birthday is truly a national occasion for all citizens on his day, said the writer. Thankful as they are to the King's endeavours, he added, the Jordanian people look forward to further strides in development and progress in a country blessed with democracy, and also look forward to the day when a comprehensive peace is established in the Middle East with all the occupied territories including Arab Jerusalem returned to their lawful owners.

RECENT decision by the Social Security Corporation to increase by 10 per cent the amount of pension to each retired Jordanian covered by the corporation's is criticised by Samih Maayta, a writer in Al Dostour. He said that the increase fell far below the minimum level required by a pensioner to have a decent life and failed to help pensioners rise above the poverty line. It had been hoped that the SSC will introduce a drastic change to provide pensioners who are elderly people at least with the bare minimum to keep them above the poverty line, said the writer. It has been established with total income reaching JD 100 a month are considered as living around the poverty line but many of the SSC pensioners receive JD 75 even with the latest increase in their pension, continued the writer.

Washington Watch

By Dr. James Zogby

Rabin's assassination and the prospects for peace

THE ASSASSINATION of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin casts a pall over the Middle East peace process. It is a tragic reminder of the role that religiously-based fanaticism has played in shaping Israeli policy towards the peace process.

For two years now, Israel's fundamentalists and their threats of violence have seriously constrained the ability of the Israeli government to meet several Palestinian concerns in the process. Continued settlement building, maintaining provocative settler communities in Gaza and Hebron, and regular episodes of settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank have all combined to distort the process and delay implementation of the Declaration of Principles.

Now Mr. Rabin, who was so often frustrated by those groups, and who frequently denounced them, has lost his life to one of their disciples.

While many question whether or not the process will survive the passing of Mr. Rabin, in a recent meeting with Arab-American leaders President Bill Clinton provided a U.S. commitment that the timetables agreed upon by the Israelis and Palestinians would be adhered to.

Those of us who met with the president pressed him

on this point and indicated our deep concern for the continuity of the peace process. We also articulated our frustration with the status quo before the Mr. Rabin assassination: the slow pace of implementation of the conditions facing Palestinians in Hebron and Jerusalem, and the difficulties faced by Palestinians resulting from continuing closure of the West Bank and Gaza as well as other non-security impediments to Palestinians' economic growth.

The president was quite clear in asserting the importance of "bringing the fruits of peace" to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and his understanding of the difficulties created by the closures and other impediments.

Other administration officials with whom Arab-Americans recently met were equally clear on these points. U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown repeated a call he made last January when he travelled to Gaza and met with PNA President Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian business community. The closure of the territories is an impediment to business and growth. Another way must be found to balance Israeli security concerns with Palestinian economic

needs.

Another U.S. administration official who spoke to Arab-Americans this weekend presented an optimistic assessment of the peace process in the wake of the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin. The loss of Mr. Rabin, he stated, was a tragic one for peace. He asserted that the prime minister had both the vision and the strength to mobilise Israeli support to sustain the drive towards peace. But, the administration official noted, the murder of the prime minister "cannot and will not stop the process" because there are forces driving the process forward on both sides.

The peace process, in his view, has become both institutionalised and irreversible.

One thing is certain. Israeli society and the American Jewish community have been traumatised by the assassination. U.S. officials have been shocked, as well, by their recognition of the real threat posed by Jewish fundamentalism and violence.

Recent polls show that Israelis have responded to the murder of Mr. Rabin by becoming even more strongly committed to carrying out Israel's withdrawal from the territories, cracking down on violent right-wing factions and

even supporting acting Prime Minister Shimon Peres in election polls over Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu.

Whether or not these attitudes will be sustained, and whether or not the terms of Israeli-Palestinian agreements and timetables will be adhered to remains to be seen. But what is clear is that the ugly murder of Mr. Rabin has shaken up attitudes in Israel and forced the issue of peace to be more directly debated and addressed than ever before.

That the assassination occurred within the week after the Amman Middle East and North Africa (MENA) summit is ironic. The summit was an impressive affair, and an overall success for its Jordanian hosts. Amman was freshly painted, secure and hospitable decked out in with banners celebrating the presence of its international visitors.

The theme of the conference was brilliantly described by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown, who noted the promise that MENA represents. He constructed a vision for those attending the conference of the future and its possibilities for prosperity and growth. It was a compelling vision — but one that requires the achievement of a just and comprehensive

peace before it becomes a lasting reality.

But in travelling the next day to Jerusalem and Hebron, I was taken from the vision of MENA to the reality of the West Bank.

Instead of "Peace Today, Profit Tomorrow," or "MENA Today, the World Tomorrow" (as two of Amman's banners read), I remarked that my visit felt more like "MENA Yesterday, Reality Today."

Palestinians still cannot do business. Some Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza were even denied permits to cross over the border to attend the MENA conference. And with provocative settlers and impediments to economic development everywhere, it is clear that if the process does not move forward with all deliberate haste and with greater justice and respect for Palestinians and their rights, the vision of regional peace could well collapse because its foundation — the Israeli-Palestinian track — is not yet firmly established.

This is the issue that Israelis will now have to confront directly. For the promise of peace and regional economic cooperation to become a reality, Israel must counter the threat posed by right-wing fanaticism and move forward in acting concretely to recognise Palestinian rights.

LETTERS

'Little surprises'

IF YOU, as an expert or as an observer of the Middle East scene, thought that you knew what is going on in this region, and if you were one of those who were surprised by the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, a piece of advice is in order here: Rewrite your notes more diligently.

But little surprises cannot be excluded either, such as the decision of Ret. General Colin Powell not to run for the presidency in the U.S. next year. Does his skin colour have something to do with it? In other words, was his "race", which is black, a major reason for abandoning the race? How can Mr. Powell's decision be related to the assassination of a high ranking Israeli official, tens of thousands of miles away from Uncle Sam's front and back yard?

Observers of the Middle East political scene, know that no one in this region is immune against the touch of a violent arm, without any prior notice, and in the most unrelated manner and place.

It is a phenomenon that not so many people are proud of. But it is a fact of life that was created and consolidated by many parties in and outside the Middle East.

Could this be the real reason for Colin Powell's wife insistence that her husband should not run for the presidency in the U.S.? In her mind, the American politics is heavily involved, if not intertwined, with the Middle East politics. Experience has taught us that the latter is contagious and knows no boundaries.

Her, too, you ran into one or two interesting, if not surprising, developments since the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin.

A reasonable amount of Arab press coverage and analysis, by commentators who usually reflect the sentiments of the average man in the street, as the term has it, has shown a notable soft and reconciliatory tone vis-a-vis the assassination event. There you can see a clear cut sense of worry regarding the nascent peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

The alternative to Mr. Rabin and his colleagues is a guaranteed nightmare. If the flag changed hands to people who applauded and condoned what Yigal Amir did. The three shots that ended the life of the ex-Israeli professional soldier, have sent successive shock waves in the minds and hearts of the majority of people in the region. Among those are the commentators and addict observers of the political scene, some of whom had cherished a high degree of reservation and scepticism about the whole issue of peace approach with Israel.

Therefore, you could sense a sudden and subtle change of heart in important media circles. And unconscious but genuine sense of worry about the future of Israel's peace as a democratic state. All kinds of advice and counsel are being poured out on how to preserve the status quo that prevailed in Israel until the fatal night of Saturday Nov. 5.

As if the killing of the ex-Israeli prime minister has unveiled the other face of Israel, and as if that murder has pushed Israel into a new unpredictable and scary phase. A phase and face that not only consider the Palestinians as intruders in the promised land of greater Israel, but also that brand people like Rabin and Peres as traitors to the real Jewish agenda. The task of such people is simple: Get rid of Rabin and his gang, politically and if necessary, physically.

What more can you think of as a source of chilling fear and cause for urgency?

The books on the Middle East peace making will not subside. The names of those who made it real will be written in glory, whether potential candidates for American presidency stayed the course or not, whether people like Yigal Amir were few or not, and whether we understood the Middle East or not.

Salim Ayoub,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Saudi blast highlights Gulf military build-up

By Charles Aldinger
Reuter

WASHINGTON — Monday's suspected car bomb blast that killed five Americans in Saudi Arabia threw a spotlight on the major military build-up by Washington and moderate Arab states in the region since the 1991 Gulf war.

It also highlighted internal and external threats facing the publicity shy ruling Saudi royal family over its growing ties with the West and quiet support of Middle East peace.

There are some 140 U.S. warplanes, 15 warships and 12,000 U.S. military personnel afloat and ashore in the area to help the Saudis and other states in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) face what are seen as threats from Iraq and Iran.

Former assistant defence secretary Lawrence Korb, also an analyst at Brookings, said the incident — no matter who was to blame — was an indication of complicated political dynamics in the Gulf.

"If the Americans don't leave the kingdom as soon as possible we will continue our actions," the caller said, speaking from Saudi Arabia. It was not possible to verify the claim.

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"The build-up by the United States and its supply of arms to the Saudis and others since the Gulf war has been brilliantly successful in containing the threat from Iraq and Iran," said Shibley Telhami of the Brookings Institution.

"But the whole thing, including the establishment this year of a U.S. navy fleet based in Bahrain, has increased internal political unrest in the Gulf states."

and other Gulf states, and most of the 12,000 military personnel are aboard navy ships or based with American warplanes in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

The Saudis are Washington's closest allies in the region and have bought well over \$50 billion in warplanes, tanks and other weapons in the past decade, most of them from the United States. But they have refused to allow U.S. tanks and other armour to be stationed on their soil for emergency use by an American army brigade in case of a new Gulf emergency.

Bahrain, in a reflection of its own sensitivities at home, agreed to allow 18 U.S. F-16 fighter jets to be based in the emirate until the end of the year while an American aircraft carrier will be missing from the Gulf.

"We agreed to remove the planes after that deadline," said a U.S. defence official on Monday. "The Saudis and others are very supportive but they have to be careful over the profile of what is seen by many as an outside presence."

Dr. Telhami noted that while this year's basing of a new U.S. fifth fleet in Bahrain to serve the Indian Ocean and Gulf was not highly publicised in the United States "it was a very high-profile decision in the region." It was portrayed by the navy as an administrative move which would not add any ships in the area. But out there it indicated permanency at a minimum.

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ing reaffirms resolve

(continued from page 1)

unfulfilled nor the most expensive; but it is certainly the saddest. The prime minister intended to give it to you personally but most regrettably I was doing so on his behalf. I did not ask Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's permission as one who was the close personal witness to the exceptional relationship between the two of you I know that today he would have shed you good health, long life, and success ... I believe in the Rabin family and the people of Israel join me in these greetings. Your Majesty, the King, happy birthday as we say in Hebrew 'Baruch atah'

The King replied: "Thank you very much indeed for coming over with us. It is very very special gift. It is in this very house in my room that I met our dear departed friend so many times in our joint effort to achieve our dearest wishes in dreams, peace between our two countries and nations within the context of a comprehensive peace. His loss is very personal one. He was a man of honour, courage and vision and he had the gift of being beyond today, and tomorrow and dedicating his life for everyone, for future generations and their inheritance."

The King continued: "I always miss my brother and dear friend. But I believe as spirit will always be with us. And if there is anything that I can commit to as I have done so far for the rest of my life is to work for what we worked together, and that is a better future for all our people and for this region. I hope that my friend is with us and that you will convey to the Rabin family our love, respects, and warmest wishes. After all to them they are our family. And so the memories will always be treasured, will be kept in a safe place in our hearts. Thank you so much for such a thoughtful gift and I know that my friend is with us and frugal will always be with us in our superhearts, in our minds and in time I have done our efforts to accomplish what we worked together to achieve and now that hopefully a better future. Thank you very very much."

Ambassador Shamir said: "Your Majesty, it is an honour to deliver this message sent to Your Majesty by Prime Minister Shimon Peres on the occasion of his 60th birthday. On this occasion, I offer you the best wishes on behalf of the Israeli government and people, wishing you good health and progress and peace under your courageous and wise leadership."

The King replied: "Thank you. Could you please relay my thanks and appreciation to the acting prime minister. I am proud of our friendship which has existed for a long period of time. We were looking for means to establish a just and honourable peace in this region leading to the two peoples and for the whole region. I know that the conditions that he is persistent in passing through as a result of losing a brother and getting a lungful of a comrade, and a brother for us negotiating me too. I wish him every success and stress that we will do our best to support him with all our responsibilities and wish him success on the way to serving our people and to achieve the exhaustible peace, leading to full cooperation between our peoples and serving the coming generations."

Replies to questions from Jordanian journalists who accompanied Mr. Hafez and Mr. Shamir, the King wished Mr. Peres "every success in carrying the banner and I assure him all our support and our help and we will not waver in the face of what may happen." "We must double our efforts to achieve the only worthy objective which is comprehensive peace in this situation and certainly as far as possible between Jordan and Israel. It is not only a reality, but a reality of which we are proud and it goes to the passage of every day. Yitzhak Rabin will always be remembered by all of us and will always be with us in his memory. I wish his family all the wishes of our family here and maintain them. Asked what message he gave the people of Israel, the King said: "I can tell them that my late friend left them a legacy of peace and I hope that it will rise to the level of challenge and will double our efforts for the sake of the environment for coming generations to come in our region."

Also Tuesday King Hussein received Qatari Minister of Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, who conveyed to him a message of best wishes on his birthday from Qatari leader Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani.

The Qatari minister also presented King Hussein with a gift from Sheikh Hamad as a gesture of appreciation of the Qatari leadership and people for King Hussein. The audience was attended by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein.

King Hussein also received telephones and messages of good wishes from Arab and foreign heads of state and officials on the occasion of his birthday.

King Hussein received a telephone call from Israeli President Ezer Weizman, who congratulated the King in his name and on behalf of the Israeli government and people.

Mr. Weizman wished King Hussein continued good health and happiness and the Jordanian people further progress and prosperity.

King Hussein thanked Mr. Weizman on his call and voiced Jordan's commitment to continue working to bring about peace in the Middle East.

King Hussein received a simple call from Sultan Qaboos of Oman who offered his best wishes to retain the White House next year.

King Hussein and Sultan Qaboos stressed the need to continue work on enhancing Jordanian-Omani cooperation.

King Hussein also received a cable from King Hassan II of Morocco who offered the King his best wishes and praised the King's effort exerted to achieve peace in the region.

Other cables were sent by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Chinese President Jiang Zemin, Austrian President Thomas Klestil, the president of the Swiss federation Casper Vilner, Philippines President Fidel Ramos, Romanian President Ion Iliescu and Czech President Vaclav Havel.

King Hussein received a congratulatory telephone call from Venezuelan President Ramon Jose Velasquez.

In his telephone call, broadcast live on Venezuelan television and radio, Mr. Velasquez praised the King's courage and wise policies as well as his role in achieving peace and security in the Middle East.

The Venezuelan minister of transport offered his best wishes to the King on the occasion.

Queen Elizabeth II sent a message expressing her best wishes to the King on his birthday.

The message was conveyed by the chief of Britain's royal protocol who visited Jordanian Ambassador to the United Kingdom Fuad Ayyoub.

King Hussein also received congratulations from the chairman of the religious relations unit of the German Anglican Churches Federation, Bishop Ralph Koby.

Commander of Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) forces in Jordan Brigadier Mohammed Qudsieh sent a cable to the King offering his best wishes to His Majesty and paying tribute to the Hashemite family.

The King also received cables from presidents of Jordanian federations, chambers of commerce, societies, mayors, secretaries general of political parties, club presidents, Muslim and Christian clergymen, tribal chieftains and refugee camp leaders.

Her Royal Highness Princess Haya on Tuesday attended a celebration organised by Haya Bint Al Hussein School in Naour to mark last week. "It has become a tradition for us to celebrate the King's birthday."

The celebration included speeches, poetry recitals and book and art exhibitions.

Pullback

(Continued from page 1)

Palestinians participate in the elections on Jan. 20," he said.

"What looks like a highly complicated agreement is today a reality."

The Jenin withdrawal would serve as a model for the next pullbacks due in the towns of Tulkarem, Qalqilya, Ramallah, Bethlehem and Nablus.

"This is a very delicate issue because it is a highly sensitive mixture of political considerations and security needs."

"We want to do it so as not to disturb the normal life of the people in the West Bank whether they are Jewish people or Arab people."

WHEN HE started he seemed weary, half-dejected. But as the questions began, the Colin Powell of old emerged. His answers were honest, witty and elegant by turn, at times self-deprecating, but with never a shred of bitterness. In truth a class act, perhaps the classiest in contemporary American public life. Alas, it will not be available to voters.

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King Hussein received a simple call from Sultan Qaboos of Oman who offered his best wishes to retain the White House next year.

King Hussein and Sultan Qaboos stressed the need to continue work on enhancing Jordanian-Omani cooperation.

King Hussein also received a cable from King Hassan II of Morocco who offered the King his best wishes and praised the King's effort exerted to achieve peace in the region.

Other cables were sent by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Chinese President Jiang Zemin, Austrian President Thomas Klestil, the president of the Swiss federation Casper Vilner, Philippines President Fidel Ramos, Romanian President Ion Iliescu and Czech President Vaclav Havel.

King Hussein received a congratulatory telephone call from Venezuelan President Ramon Jose Velasquez.

In his telephone call, broadcast live on Venezuelan television and radio, Mr. Velasquez praised the King's courage and wise policies as well as his role in achieving peace and security in the Middle East.

The Venezuelan minister of transport offered his best wishes to the King on the occasion.

Queen Elizabeth II sent a message expressing her best wishes to the King on his birthday.

The message was conveyed by the chief of Britain's royal protocol who visited Jordanian Ambassador to the United Kingdom Fuad Ayyoub.

King Hussein also received congratulations from the chairman of the religious relations unit of the German Anglican Churches Federation, Bishop Ralph Koby.

Commander of Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) forces in Jordan Brigadier Mohammed Qudsieh sent a cable to the King offering his best wishes to His Majesty and paying tribute to the Hashemite family.

The King also received cables from presidents of Jordanian federations, chambers of commerce, societies, mayors, secretaries general of political parties, club presidents, Muslim and Christian clergymen, tribal chieftains and refugee camp leaders.

Her Royal Highness Princess Haya on Tuesday attended a celebration organised by Haya Bint Al Hussein School in Naour to mark last week. "It has become a tradition for us to celebrate the King's birthday."

The celebration included speeches, poetry recitals and book and art exhibitions.

(Continued from page 1)

Among those claiming responsibility for the attack were the previously unknown groups called the "Tigers of the Gulf" and the "Islamic Movement for Change," he said.

A man claiming to be from Tigers of the Gulf called AFP to say his group had carried out the bombing to force U.S. troops to leave Saudi Arabia.

The Pentagon official ruled out a pullout of forces from the country where the United States has had military presence for 50 years. "This has been a very stable environment for U.S. presence," the official said.

"This is a very delicate issue because it is a highly sensitive mixture of political considerations and security needs."

"We want to do it so as not to disturb the normal life of the people in the West Bank whether they are Jewish people or Arab people."

The official Saudi Press Agency said Riyadh will not change its policy over this "odious crime" and carried an interview by the interior

Who'd want to be president?

Rupert Cornwell on why General Powell turned down the chance to run for the White House



Yes please, said General Eisenhower (second from right); No thanks, said General Powell

courageous to run, pondered the matter and then issued a polite "No thanks."

If Gen. Powell had decided to seek the U.S. presidency, he would have been subjected to an electoral ordeal unparalleled in the democracies on this planet for duration, cost, expenditure of energy, and sheer nastiness. Even before he began his announcement, Alma Powell, who had opposed a presidential run from the outset and who stood beside her husband on the podium, was positively beaming.

But disruption of family life is not the half of it. In 1789, George Washington, the first American soldier-turned-President, won office by acclamation. The last of them, Dwight Eisenhower, could spend what passed for the primary season of 1952 outside the country, and the lack of privacy an endures humiliation. The quest for the presidency requires not a decent plan to balance the budget, but, in Gen. Powell's words, a "passion and commitment" that he could not feel. In Bill Clinton's case, passion and commitment mean a skin thick enough to undergo a 18 months.

This time, a really zealous contender like Senator Phil Gramm of Texas has been running almost from the moment of Mr. Clinton's inauguration on January 20, 1993. The travelling is murderous, the speech-making inane and the lack of privacy an endless humiliation. The quest for the presidency requires not a decent plan to balance the budget, but, in Gen. Powell's words, a "passion and commitment" that he could not feel. In Bill Clinton's case, passion and commitment mean a skin thick enough to undergo a 18 months.

And yet every turn there is fundraising. The cost of a decent primary campaign runs at \$20 million — and most, if not all, of that must be raised before-hand.

The system, of course, has its defenders. The presidency, it may reasonably be insisted, is not a straightforward entry-level job. The brutality of a campaign is political Darwinism, ensuring the survival of the fittest, discarding the weak, the half-hearted and the inept. But surely, counter others, the methods of

prime-time national television appearance in January 1992, immediately after the football Superbowl, hand-in-hand with his wife, to explain away alleged marital infidelities.

Even before he had entered the race, warning shots were crossing the general's bows. Stories were afoot about his wife's mild depressive condition.

Equally absurd, and certainly more wounded, were the attacks of conservative Republican activists, one of whom last week dismissed Gen. Powell's 35 years in the military, his two tours in Vietnam, his role in the Gulf war, as something out of Gilbert and Sullivan, the work of a man who had "become ruler of the Queen's navy by polishing the handles on the big brass front door." And all that before he was a candidate.

The system, of course, has its defenders. The presidency, it may reasonably be insisted, is not a straightforward entry-level job. The brutality of a campaign is political Darwinism, ensuring the survival of the fittest, discarding the weak, the half-hearted and the inept. But surely, counter others, the methods of

democracy should be more complex than natural selection, run according to the laws of market capitalism.

The sadness and the tangible sense of letdown after Gen. Powell's departure epitomise doubts about the entire electoral process. More and more, a vicious, self-defeating mechanism seems to be at work. The most appealing candidates tend to come from the centre. But the driving forces are on the ideological extremes, embodied by the activists who tend to predominate among primary voters. Hence the false choices that have so contributed to a national disgust at politics that drove one in five American voters in 1992 to support a flaky, self-promoting businessman named Ross Perot.

Take Colin Powell. True, he symbolised his country's yearning for racial healing. But in other ways, too, he embodied a "sensible centre" that believes, as he does, that abortion, while regrettable, should not be outlawed, and that common sense dictates' measure of gun control. Instead, the electorate is deafened by debate over false choices: between total gun control and the freedom to have a handgun in the back garden; between pro-choice and pro-life lobbies on abortion, both bent on turning common ground into scorched earth. Reform welfare and Medicare, yes. Roll back government, yes — but not in a way that leaves the weakest members of society without a safety net. Such was Gen. Powell's philosophy. Most Americans agree.

Then there is the media, nowhere more fieble than here. With few exceptions, Gen. Powell has been treated with little less than idolatry by the press and television, as half a dozen national magazine covers this year alone attest. But friends can turn into foes: ask Bill Clinton, first the darling of the chattering classes, only to be ambushed over Jennifer Flowers and alleged draft dodging.

Mr. Clinton took every shot and won the supreme prize. But the damage to his reputation infects his presidency to this day. Why, Colin Powell and his family finally asked (and answered, sometime, on Monday evening), should I take the same risk?

The Independent

No cabinet reshuffle before Parliament session

(Continued from page 1)

the changes that will be introduced in cooperation with Parliament.

"We are going to take action. But certainly it is going to be within the law. We are not going to break the law or act as if martial law is still there," the prime minister said, adding that the legislative changes that will be made will be "absolutely" in line with the democratic process.

"We have not worked on the details but nothing is going to be done without going through the constitutional process."

"We are going to do this. And if this is what it takes to stop this sort of nonsense, I do not mind criticism of being dictatorial or undemocratic," Sharif Zeid said.

"Some people are working on destroying the morale of the people and destroying the confidence of the people in their country and their government."

"There is a lot of things that are objectionable as far as I am concerned but you cannot prove it in a court of law," he said.

Addressing the changes that the government will introduce to the laws governing professional associations which King Hussein said should focus on professional issues and stop interfering in politics, the prime minister said the government was still studying its course of action in order to ensure that members of these associations were not negatively affected.

"How can you prove it in a court of law? A person receiving money from foreigners is not going to do it in the middle of the street. Such acts are very difficult to prove."

But, the prime minister

said, some of the material written in newspapers clearly shows that its writer is working against the interests of the country and its people to serve the purposes of foreign powers.

"Most of the members are decent people, truly Jordanian. We are not going to inflict on them any financial damage or loss. We are going to find a way to maintain their benefits," he said.

"Reading an article sometimes, I'm sure that you notice that... no real loyal Jordanian would write it" and I'm not talking about loyalty to the crown or the government here but about being Jordanian and feeling with your people."

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"How can you prove it in a court of law? A person receiving money from foreigners is not going to do it in the middle of the street. Such acts are very difficult to prove."

"This is the most difficult point," said the prime minister, adding that there were a lot of benefits that the union members had, and the government would take no action that will deny those members such benefits.

"Most of the members are decent people, truly Jordanian. We are not going to inflict on them any

WTO: Trade growing faster than production

GENEVA (AFP) — World trade in merchandise is growing markedly faster than production and is a sign of increasing economic globalisation, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) said in an annual report for 1995 released here Tuesday.

The study, entitled International Trade — Trends and Statistics, found that trade in goods this year will increase three times faster than output and twice as fast in 1996.

In volume, world trade will grow by eight per cent, considered a high rate even though slightly down on the record 9.5 per cent growth recorded in 1994.

For 1996 the WTO predicted a further modest slowing but added that "trade growth will remain above the average of the past decade."

The report said that from 1950 to 1994, the volume of world trade in goods increased an average of slightly more than six per cent a year, against an increase in production in the same period of around four per cent a year.

"Thus, during those 45 years world merchandise trade multiplied 14 times and output 5.5 times," according to the study, which found that the gap between the two

growth rates widened considerably starting in 1990.

"But it is not yet clear whether or not this represents a permanent shift to a faster rate of increase in the world's trade-to-output ratio," the study said.

The WTO attributed the surge in trade and "global integration" to governmental policies as well as technological innovations that cut communication and transport costs.

Those developing and transition economies which have participated in globalisation by opening up their own markets have enjoyed faster economic growth," according to the report.

For developed nations, members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, "there is evidence that the deepening of trade linkages has helped moderate cyclical downturns."

The study noted that technological change and "evolving strategies of firms and individual investors" are likely to provide momentum to globalisation.

But it cautioned that government policies can "speed up, slow down or even reverse progress on global integration."

In 1994, the value of trade in merchandise increased 13 per cent, surpassing the amount of \$4,000 billion for the first time to reach \$4,090 billion.

The value of trade in services went up eight per cent to reach \$1,100 billion after having stagnated in 1993.

For the first six months of 1995, merchandise trade rose 23 per cent in value, which, allowing for the depreciation of the U.S. dollar, corresponds to an eight per cent increase in full-year growth in volume.

Among the world's top 20 trading nations, the WTO found that trade measured in exports grew more than 20 per cent in the first half of 1995 in China, Malaysia, South Korea and Mexico.

Exchanges measured in imports increased 20 per cent in South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand and Brazil.

In the last decade trade in products from extractive industries fell from 14 per cent of the total of 11 per cent while the percentage of business machines and telecommunications equipment rose from nine to 11 per cent.

The percentage of other products in the overall picture held more or less constant.

Arab Gulf states' oil capacity rises but actual output stable

ABU DHABI (AFP) —

Arab Gulf states are pressing ahead with plans to boost their oil production capacity but actual output has remained unchanged due to steady increases from non-OPEC producers, experts said.

Saudi Arabia and the two other Gulf oil giants Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) had banked on a steady growth in world demand to raise production and minimise economic damage caused by low crude prices.

But they have been unable to boost actual output over the past three years although expansion projects have created large surpluses in their capacities.

Gulf states are disappointed as their earlier projections of higher production did not come true," a Gulf-based oil analyst said.

"They have no choice but to stick to their production quotas in fear any excess output could lead to a price collapse," one expert said.

OPEC's production ceiling

has remained unchanged

although world demand has

grown by more than two mil-

lion b/d over the past two

years.

In 1994, demand grew by around one million b/d to 68.5 million b/d while it is forecast to rise to 1.1 million b/d in 1995 and 1.6 million b/d in 1996.

The bulk of the increase in the past two years was met on North Sea producers Britain and Norway, which will likely account for most of the growth in 1996, according to OPEC and independent estimates.

Increases will also come from China, Mexico, Brazil, Ecuador, Argentina and Oman.

Venezuela and some other OPEC members have been blamed for most of the group's excess production of around one million b/d in September. But Gulf states have stressed they would respect their output quotas, fearing any violations could spark another production war and hit prices.

According to the Kuwait-based Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), production by its 10 members grew by only 200,000 b/d in 1994 and there would be a similar rise

in 1995 and 1996.

It said member states, including Saudi Arabia and other key Arab producers, were excising restraint to stave off another price crisis.

"Steady increases in the production by independent oil producers have put strong pressure on OPEC and depressed its share in the world market," it said. "This has placed it in a difficult situation, in which it has to choose between safeguarding its market share or continuing its role as a residual producer to protect prices against a fresh collapse."

OPEC has little room to manoeuvre as it already exceeds its ceiling by nearly one million b/d and producers outside it are hitting output. A rise in the ceiling could lead to a price collapse," one expert said.

Experts said Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE were expanding capacity in the hope demand for their oil would pick up after the year 2000 when supply sources from other areas began to decline.

The three countries currently have an extra capacity of more than two million b/d and the figure is set to surge after more expansion projects are completed in the year 2000, the experts said.

Saudi Arabia's capacity will reach around 10 million b/d while Kuwait plans to boost it to 3.5 million b/d and the UAE to three million b/d.

"In the near future, their coffers are not expected to see any large improvement as output and prices will likely remain stable," an oil analyst said.

"But the situation will change when supplies from other producers start to re-cede, Gulf states could then regain their oil boom prestige."

Lebanon merchants told to price in local currency

BEIRUT (R) — The Lebanese government Monday ordered businesses to begin pricing consumer goods and services in Lebanese liras as of Dec. 2 in a bid to curtail the pegging of prices to the U.S. dollar.

"Steady increases in the production by independent oil producers have put strong pressure on OPEC and depressed its share in the world market," it said. "This has placed it in a difficult situation, in which it has to choose between safeguarding its market share or continuing its role as a residual producer to protect prices against a fresh collapse."

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"But the situation will change when supplies from other producers start to re-cede, Gulf states could then regain their oil boom prestige."

U.N. chief appeals to private sector

STRASBOURG (AFP) — U.N. Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali Tuesday addressed the European Parliament and called on the private sector worldwide to help build a "new social and democratic transitional order."

The speech, the first ever by Dr. Boutros-Ghali to the assembly, was given to mark the 50th anniversary of the United Nations.

Speaking in French to a plenary session in the eastern French city of Strasbourg Dr. Boutros-Ghali said business had to help in the effort for democracy, and for the creation of a "new social pact."

Commercial and financial companies... must make the interests of the general public and collective well-being a part of their economic strategies," he said. "The globalisation of the economy has to go hand-in-hand with a globalisation of democracy."

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1995

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Avoid one in authority who is irate at this time and would not grant you any favour. Think before you speak and do not criticise others.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 18) Find new data which can be applied to your own interests to make career activities better, be sure it is the acceptable kind.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 19) Don't try to handle some business affair with a testy person today or you soon find yourself behind the proverbial eight ball.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Avoid being pressured into some agreement with another and feel safe both during the day and night for your to be prosperous.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Although your career activities may be going slowly, don't run after other interests or you will regret it later. Show you have poise and wisdom.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) Get together with congenial friends and loved ones and have a fine time, provided you are not extravagant. Be patient and opportunities will come to you.

LIBRA: (September 22 to October 21) Be sure to use control today with those who dwell with you and maintain harmony. Show that you have a sense of humour.

SCORPIO: (October 22 to November 21) Be careful you do nothing in the world of activity today which could be harmful to your health. Remain poised against all adversity.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You may not be thinking straight where money is concerned today, so be sure to double-check everything for completeness.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Don't be soft-spoken if some situation arises which is not to your liking, or you can regret it. Caution is the keynote at this time.

ARIQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) A practical affair of a personal nature should be further studied, so don't jump into as yet or you could regret your decision at a later time.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You may find it difficult to gain some personal wish, so concentrate on other objectives. Be concerned with the practical.

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye

Official study: Japan's prosperity only skin-deep

TOKYO (AFP) — Despite wealth that is the envy of the rest of the world, the Japanese people feel their quality of life lags behind other industrialised nations, according to an official study released Tuesday.

Small homes at astronomical prices, expensive consumer products, intense work pressure with few holidays, and a restricted social life are a few of many complaints made by the Japanese.

"Many Japanese still seem not to feel either affluence or a sense of satisfaction corresponding with the nation's economic growth," the report from the Economic Planning Agency (EPA) said.

The report entitled Japan's "Autobiography for 50 Post-war Years: In Search of a Diversified Richer Lifestyle" was carried out using official statistics and surveys among the population.

Japan's extraordinary post-

war boom is illustrated by comparing its gross domestic product (GDP) figures with those of other countries, the report says.

In 1960 Japan represented 4.1 per cent of the sum of all countries' GDPs, but reached 18.3 per cent in 1993. GDP per inhabitant has surpassed that of the United States every year since 1987.

But the EPA says this apparent prosperity is only skin-deep.

Average living space is the smallest per inhabitant among the industrialised countries, while Tokyo and Osaka have the world's highest land prices — 10 times the average for the world's big cities.

Meanwhile, the difference between household income and house prices continues to grow.

The length of time spent working per year is higher than Germany, France or

countries, even though they have higher average incomes than other countries.

As a result of all these problems, Japanese who complain that their living standards have decreased have outnumbered those who see improvements since 1974.

Young people in particular are less satisfied with their family or professional lives than their counterparts in other industrialised countries.

Paid holidays are also much shorter than in these four countries, the EPA says.

Although employees are legally entitled to 20 days' holidays in the year, many only take a small proportion of that, feeling pressure to show loyalty to their firm.

The EPA also notes that with higher prices, the Japanese consume less than people in other industrialised

THE Daily Crossword by Eugene Puffenberger

ACROSS

1 Indisposed

5 Oil card levers

9 Befitting a king

14 Disney sci-fi film

15 Lampreys

16 Irregularly

notched

17 Mine over

18 Giving no heed

19 Sing like Bing

20 Pass a law

23 Cheap copies

24 Vest

26 Speak in a silly way

27 "Gu" — (LeSage novel)

28 Eternity

30 Sphere

33 Constancy

37 Painter Paul

38 Thrusting weapon

39 Food scrap

40 "of robins..."

41 Composer Salle

42 Fondness for candy

44 Family member

45 Cut short

46 Military acronym

47 Explorer La —

49 Jaunty

53 Made to be easily assembled

57 Funny O'Donnell

58 Tidal bore

59 Shed tears

61 Swerve

62 More mature

63 Memorable periods

64 Therefore

Graf named player of the year

NEW YORK (R) — The WTA Tour rolled out two of its greatest former champions at Madison Square Garden on Monday to honour the best in women's tennis in 1995.

Retired greats Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova presided over the WTA Tour annual awards ceremony between matches at the season-ending championships, an event won a combined 12 times by the pair.

There were no surprises in the major awards categories with world number one Steffi Graf taking player of the year honours.

Despite injuries and personal problems, the German star won eight of the 10 tournaments she entered this year, including the French Open, Wimbledon and the U.S. Open. She compiled a 44-2 match record, heading into the season finale.

There could be only one choice for comeback player of the year and Monica Seles, who was forced to pull out of the tournament with tendinitis of the left knee and a sprained ankle, flew to New York to accept the award.

After more than two and a

half years away from the game following her horrific on-court stabbing in Hamburg in 1993, Seles returned in August and won her first tournament back — the

Women's tennis rankings

1. Steffi Graf (Ger)	383.27 pts
2. Monica Seles (USA)	251.14
3. Conchita Martinez (Spa)	234.08
4. Kimiko Date (Jpn)	169.40
5. Gabriela Sabatini (Arg)	167.10
6. Mary Pierce (Fra)	166.31
7. Magdalena Maleeva (Bul)	149.63
8. Mary Joe Fernandez (USA)	134.35
9. Iva Majoli (Cze)	131.93
10. Lindsay Davenport (USA)	131.50
11. Jane Newenna (Cze)	130.37
12. Anke Huber (Ger)	118.55
13. Chanda Rubin (USA)	91.63
14. Brenda Schultz (Ned)	87.52
15. Natasha Zvereva (Blt)	83.43
16. Martina Hingis (Swi)	70.54
17. Naoko Sawamura (Jpn)	69.21
18. Amy Frazier (USA)	66.17
19. Amanda Coetzer (RSA)	62.71
20. Lisa Raymond (USA)	59.81

Canadian Open. She then cruised all the way to the U.S. Open final before falling to Graf in three sets.

"I wish I was playing this week," Seles told the crowd.

"I'm looking forward to seeing you in 1996 and playing some great tennis."

Lest there be any doubt about how much tournament organisers miss Seles, here, her picture with a banner headline that reads "welcome back Monica" adorns both the official programme and draw sheet for the showcase event.

Tuesday had even been designated "welcome back Monica night" before her withdrawal late last week.

Doubled team of the year went to American Gigi Fernandez and Natasha Zvereva of Belarus, winners of the French and U.S. Opens and runners-up at Wimbledon and the Australian Open.

Nineteen-year-old American Chanda Rubin was named most improved player of the year.

Rubin cracked the top 20 this year and is now 13th in the rankings. She qualified for the this week's elite 16-player field for the first time.

Most improved newcomer went to Swiss prodigy Martina Hingis, who turned professional last year and is already ranked 16th in the world.

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UEFA head disagrees with Havelange on Nigeria

PRAGUE (R) — UEFA chief Lennart Johansson said on Monday that no decision had been taken to transfer the 1997 World Youth Soccer Championship to Nigeria despite reports that FIFA head Joao Havelange promised the African country the event last week.

Johansson, also a FIFA vice-president, said he only knew about Havelange's trip to Nigeria from the papers, and that such a decision could not be taken until the political situation in Nigeria stabilises.

"The only thing I know is that we have decided to go to Malaysia in 1997. We took a decision already. If anything is to be changed it has to go back to the executive committee," he said during a FIFA symposium in Prague.

"Until the situation stabilises, we should avoid sending young people somewhere, if for medical reasons, or from a security court of view, there are risks," he added.

Havelange made a four-day trip to Nigeria last week during which he met the country's military ruler General Sani Abacha and was awarded a traditional chieftaincy after saying they may be given the 1997 tournament.

He also apologised for FIFA's last-minute decision to prevent the African country from holding the finals in March, after being informed there were outbreaks of ebola and meningitis at two of the venues due to stage matches.

Havelange's visit occurred before the execution of nine dissidents in Nigeria led to the country's suspension from the British Commonwealth and the recalling of ambassadors by the European Union and the United States.

The lack of communication surrounding the visit could further strain relations between Havelange and Johansson.

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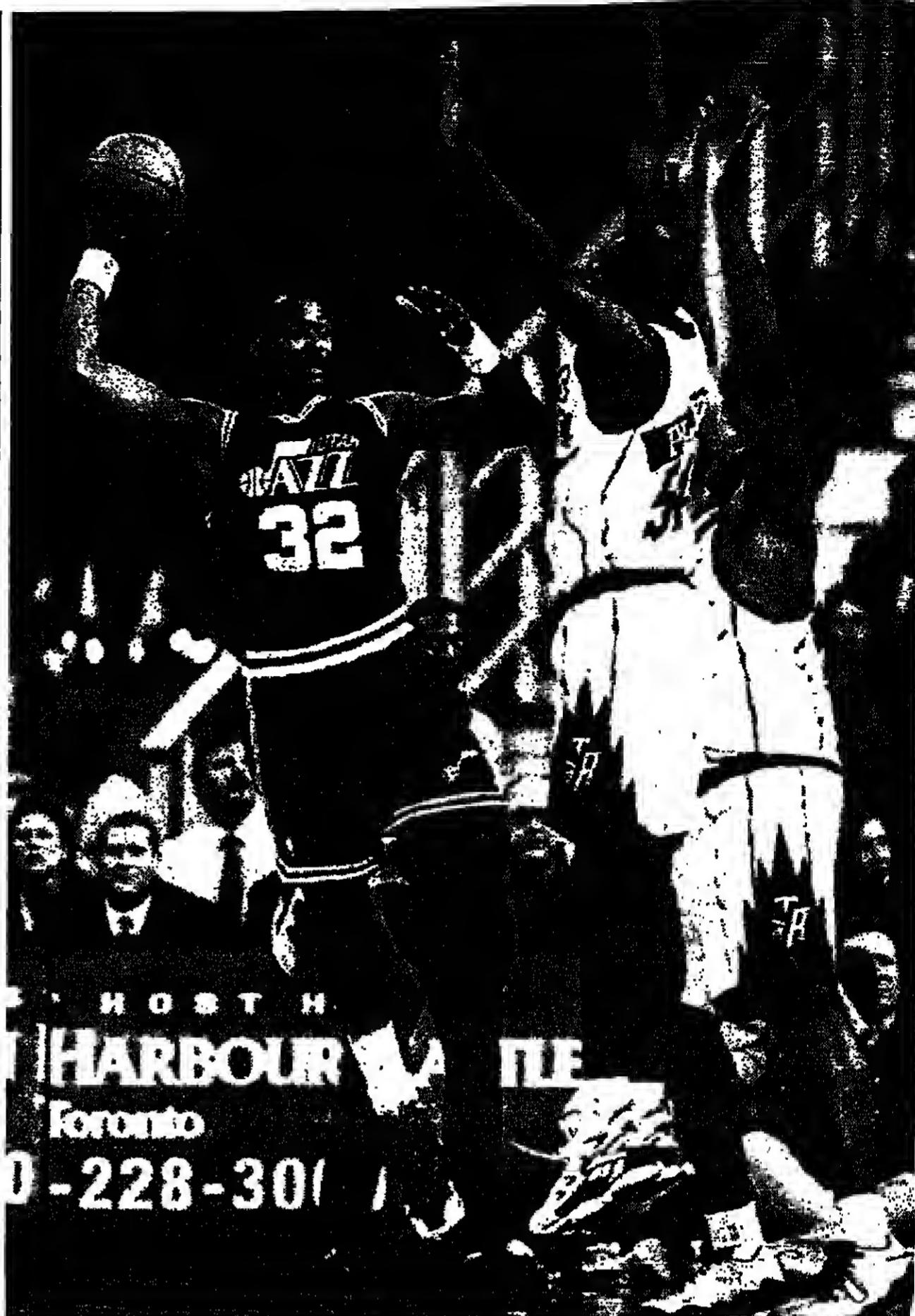
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MANAGING DIRECTOR



during first half action in Toronto November 13. Utah won 103-100 (Reuters photo)

Jazz beat Raptors, Dallas over Vancouver

TORONTO (R) — John Stockton scored 15 of his 29 points in the third quarter and added two late free throws that snapped a tie as the Utah Jazz defeated the slumping Toronto Raptors, 103-100, on Monday.

With the score tied 99-99, Stockton hit a pair of free throws to give the Jazz the lead with 1:33 remaining.

Then Alvin Robertson hit on two free throws to pull the Raptors within a point, but Utah's Adam Keefe made a layup for a 103-100 advantage with 5.5 seconds to go.

Robertson and Willie Anderson each scored 22 points for Toronto.

In Vancouver, Scott Brooks scored five of his seven points in a fourth-quarter run and Jason Kidd added 26 points as the Dallas Mavericks overcame a horrible shooting performance to defeat the Vancouver Grizzlies, 94-89.

Dallas led, 70-69, with 9:25 to play before Brooks nailed a three-pointer with 9:04 remaining.

George McCloud and Jim Jackson made two free throws apiece to make it 77-69.

Bryant Reeves scored a

basket to pull the Grizzlies within six before Brooks capped the run with a pair of free throws to give Dallas a 79-71 edge.

Kidd hit a pair of baskets in a 9-2 run late in the fourth-quarter that put the game out of reach.

Dallas shot 27.7 per cent from the field, making just 26 of 94 shots.

Greg Anthony scored 19 points and Byron Scott added 17 for Vancouver, which has lost five straight after starting the season with two wins.

U.S. team goes coach hunting

FOXBORO, Massachusetts (R) — Major League Soccer's New England Revolution, looking to sign a big name coach, sent general manager Brian O'Donovan to Lisbon on Monday to speak with Ireland manager Jack Charlton.

O'Donovan will watch Wednesday's Portugal-Ireland European Championship qualifying match and hopes to interview coaching candidates — including Ireland manager Jack Charlton — for the 1996 inaugural season of the U.S. League.

"We're going to come up with the best coach available," said O'Donovan.

"Money will not stand in our way. We're not going to spend a million dollars but we want to win and that (selecting a coach) is where it all starts."

"He (Charlton) has been courted by us," O'Donovan said. "Anyone of his calibre would be. I don't plan on talking to him any time before the match, nobody in his

right mind would, it is far too important but I will talk to him at some point."

Charlton, a member of England's 1966 World Cup champions, said last month he would quit as Ireland manager the moment the team were eliminated from the European Championship.

But on Monday Charlton, who guided Ireland into the 1990 and 1994 World Cup finals, adopted a different line.

"No matter what happens here I'm going to sit down and think about it," he told reporters in Portugal ahead of the Group Six match.

"I never said I was definitely leaving. I said I would consider it. And it certainly won't be the press that drives me out, it will be the people of Ireland."

The revolution have acknowledged targeting a trio of candidates — Charlton, Ossie Ardiles and Toni Jose Da Cunha.

O'Donovan said he also hoped to meet Toni on the

trip.

Ardiles, a member of Argentina's 1978 and 1982 World Cup squads, was fired as coach of Mexican first division club Guadalajara two weeks ago.

Toni, who played with Benfica of Portugal from 1968-82, had managerial stints with Benfica, Bordeaux of France and Spain's Sevilla, who fired him three weeks ago.

O'Donovan said season tickets for the inaugural MLS campaign, which began on April 6, had been "selling at a good clip" with about 1,500 tickets sold so far for 1996.

"We have a very savvy bunch of fans in the Boston area," O'Donovan said, "and many know that this is the last chance to support a national soccer league in this country."

Charlton may be a front-runner for the position in the mind of Revolution management due to the large Irish population of metropolitan Boston.

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Date gets Wimble
NEW YORK (AFP) — Kim and Anna Novotna and a dead heat in the WTA T
Square Garden here Monday. The Czechs and the Americans tied 5-5, 6-4 in two hours and 45 minutes to win the year's first tournament. Novotna surprised in the first set but the Czechs didn't com
Dynamo Kiev to as
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our three years to one. We
are going to next year in
European competition and
in September after the
league match against Pan
paid the charges, but UES
appeal hearing.

Eriksson signs for
PARIS (AP) — The 1995
Swedish footballer, has signed
until the end of 1997.

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as taking the 1995 Asia-Pac
ship and he currently lie
Lebanon with Spain's Carlos Sainz
will rally in the class
Don't count me ou

LISBON (AP

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Date gets Wimbledon revenge

NEW YORK (AFP) — Kimiko Date came from a set down to beat Jana Novotna and avenge her Wimbledon quarter-final defeat in the WTA Tour Championship at Madison Square Garden here Monday. The first Japanese player ever to reach the semi-finals at this year's French Open won 5-7, 6-3, 6-4 in two hours and now plays Anke Huber, who surprised Australian Open champion Mary Pierce of France in the quarter-finals. The German, who won her first tournament of the year at Leipzig last month, took exactly 60 minutes to win 6-2, 6-3 against an error-prone opponent who also lost in the first round in Philadelphia last week. Novotna surprised Date by repeatedly coming to the net in the first set but the Japanese adapted and if her passing shots did not score she could rely on Novotna missing her volleys. "The last time I played her in Wimbledon she didn't come to the net that much," Date said.

Dynamo Kiev to ask for ban reduction

KIEV (R) — Dynamo Kiev will appeal to UEFA for a reduction in their three-year European ban. "We feel insulted by an unfair decision and will prove that we are fully in the right," club spokesman Oleksy Semenchenko said on Monday. "We do not want this matter to be examined, we are asking for the suspension to be reduced from three years to one. We intend to make our appeal in the spring so that next autumn we will be able to take part in European competition." UEFA suspended Dynamo from European competitions and banned two club executives for life in September after the referee for the Champions League match against Panathinaikos said club officials had offered him a sum worth \$30,000. Dynamo won 1-0. The club denied the charges, but UEFA upheld the suspension after a five-hour appeal hearing.

Eriksson signs for Subaru

PARIS (AFP) — The 1995 Asia-Pacific Rally champion, Kenneth Eriksson, has signed for the Subaru World Rally team until the end of 1997. Subaru said that the Swedish star and his co-driver Staffan Palmander were in England last Thursday to sign a contract. They will contest in both the World and the Asia-Pacific Rally Championships. As well as taking the 1995 Asia-Pacific title, Eriksson also won the Australian and Swedish rounds of the World Championship and he currently lies third overall. He will join up at Subaru with Scotland's Colin McRae who will battle against Spain's Carlos Sainz later this month for this year's world rally title in the closing round in Britain.

Hearts sign Swedish striker

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Swedish striker Hans Eskilsson has signed a one-year contract with Scottish Premier Division side Hearts, the Swedish TT news agency said Monday. Eskilsson had played three games for the Edinburgh side on a short-term contract and did enough to impress manager Jim Jeffries. His arrival coincided with a sharp reversal of fortune for Hearts who were bottom of the league when he came and two wins and a draw later are now in mid-table.

Don't count me out yet: Charlton

LISBON (AFP) — Republic of Ireland manager Jack Charlton insisted Monday that he will not immediately quit as manager if his side are eliminated from the European Championships here on Wednesday. A month ago, when Ireland earned a reprieve by scraping home 2-1 against group six minnows Latvia, Charlton said: "The moment we don't qualify I will probably walk away. No, forget the word 'probably'." The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) keep denying they have already started to draw up a shortlist of possible replacements. Bookmakers are quoting Wimbledon's Joe Kinnear and Millwall's Mick McCarthy, the former Ireland captain, as joint favourites. And Kenny Dalglish, Blackburn's former boss and now director of football, has also come into the frame. Dalglish attended Ireland's Footballer of the Year dinner in Dublin last night but refused to comment on speculation linking him with the job.

Ince facing showdown with Moratti

LONDON (AFP) — Paul Ince could spark a transfer scramble after Inter Milan manager Roy Hodgson said here Monday that the England star will meet the Inter president this week to discuss his future. Ince is set for talks with Massimo Moratti within the next few days and unless the former Manchester United midfielder spells out his commitment to the Italian giants he could be on his way back to English football. Englishman Hodgson, manager of Inter and Switzerland, arrived in London for Wednesday's international friendly against England at Wembley, saying: "The president told me he was going to meet Paul Ince in the time that I am away. I expect what he will want to hear is that Paul is desperate to stay with us; that Paul is desperate to help Inter win things and wants to pledge his soul, if you like, to the Inter cause."



Thomas Muster

Muster seeks No. 1 spot in season finale

FRANKFURT (AFP) — Austria's French Open holder Thomas Muster has the chance to round off a great year with the number one spot in world tennis should he win the ATP Tour Championships here this week.

Muster, 28, could use his legendary drive and fighting spirit to dethrone American Pete Sampras, who achieved near perfection for himself in 1995 with a third successive Wimbledon crown and then went onto defeat major rival Andre Agassi for his third U.S. Open title.

The Austrian though has shown after years of playing mainly on clay — due in part to a career threatening knee injury incurred in a car accident with a drunken driver in Florida in 1989 — he has the game to also cause a fright no other surfaces.

"I had an awfully good clay court season, I want to see what is possible on other surfaces," he said.

The left-hander, renowned for his hardworking ethos, added: "There's no luck in this game. When you work hard, you get a payback."

The world number three earned more financial rewards in the Eurocard Indoor Open at Essen last month beating Sampras — his first indoor title and possibly a foretaste of what's to come this week.

Sampras and Muster are the only two contenders for number one spot because Agassi, who held top spot from April 10 to Nov. 6, withdrew owing to the effects of a chest muscle strain suffered in the Davis Cup semifinal with Sweden in September.

In Frankfurt, Sampras heads a round robin group of Germany's Boris Becker, Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov and South African Wayne Ferreira, who benefited from Agassi's withdrawal.

Muster's group consists of Americans Michael Chang and Jim Courier with Sweden's Thomas Enqvist the other member.

The round robin matches take place from Tuesday till Friday with the top two from both groups qualifying for Saturday's semi-finals.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAH HIRSCH
WHICH SUIT?

Both vulnerable. West deals.

NORTH	Q 10 8
	V Q 8
	Q K 8
	+K J 10 9 5
WEST	4 A 7 5 4 2
	4 6 3
	V K 8 3
	0 Q 10 2
	4 A 6
EAST	0 7 7 2
	0 3 7 6 4 3
	+Q 7 2
SOUTH	A K J 9
	V A 10 9 5
	0 A 9 6
	+6 4

The bidding: WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH
1 4 2 + Pass 3 NT

The outcome: Four of a kind.

The opening lead: Four of a kind.

The outcome of the play is often decided by a race between the declarer and the defender for the tricks required to make or break

West surely has a five-card suit headed by the ace, the ace of clubs and the king of hearts as well as either the queen of clubs or queen of hearts. It is important to take the heart finesse and if lost, West would clear spades by playing ace and another would be poised to defeat the contract when in with the ace of clubs. Meanwhile declarer can come to only eight tricks — two spades, four hearts and two diamonds.

The declarer has to rely on the club suit. The opening lead is in hand and a club is led. Should West follow low, declarer goes in with the king of clubs, which wins and then reverts to hearts since the king of clubs is the ninth trick. It doesn't help if West tries with the ace of clubs and loses. The declarer can take a second club finesse safely and establish the club suit for the contract — two spades, one heart, two diamonds and four clubs.

For the vulnerable opening bid,

European Soccer Championships

Nothing short of victory good for Dutch

LONDON (R) — The Netherlands, winners in 1988 and whose club side Ajax Amsterdam are the best in Europe, will not qualify for the European Championship finals if they lose their final group match at home to Norway on Wednesday.

On a final, decisive night of group games that the organisers' complicated qualifying system looks set to dominate, the Dutch depend entirely on themselves. Even a draw will not be enough to see their Ajax-based national team through.

Of the other former champions still involved in the competition, two have already secured berths in the 16-team finals in England next June: Russia, who as the Soviet Union were the first winners in 1960, and Spain, the next in 1964.

The rest — 1966 champions Italy, twice winners Germany (1972 and 1980), the Czech Republic who won it as Czechoslovakia in 1976, France, victorious in 1984, and current title-holders Denmark — should also make it.

But some of them will depend on good-enough records as second-placed teams in their groups to avoid the play-off in Liverpool next month between the two worst for the right to join the eight group winners, six best runners-up and hosts England in the finals.

In the tight group five, the Czech Republic should beat Luxembourg to notch up a total of 21 points. A draw would give Norway the same number but put them second because their head-to-head record favours the Czechs.

If the Netherlands beat Norway, the Norwegians will go out despite ending with the same number of points as the Dutch — the sides drew in Oslo a year ago — unless the Czechs do not beat Luxembourg and finish in third place.

Such complications dominate all the groups, even Group

Three which has one team fewer.

Switzerland, their programme of games already over, are through although it remains to be seen if it will be as group winners or a second-placed team. This depends on Turkey's last game in Sweden on Wednesday.

Germany meet Bulgaria at home in a Group Seven clash that will merely decide who finishes top, a position at present held by the Bulgarians on goal difference.

Bulgarian trainer Dimitar Penev warned his German counterpart Berti Vogts against over-confidence.

"If Mr. Vogts thinks that we are afraid of the Germans then he is overestimating himself. We have consistently proved our class since the 1994 World Cup to the U.S. and shown that we can keep up with the Germans," he said from the Bulgarians' training camp in Austria.

Bulgaria, who beat Germany in the World Cup quarter-finals and in their first Group Seven clash in Sofia in June, plan to attack, Penev said. "We will not change course. We have done well with this so far."

But even if they lose again they will finish second in the group because of their better head-to-head record against Slovakia.

Italy are also sure of finishing in the top two in Group Four but could be runners-up to Croatia, while Denmark have already secured second place to Spain in Group Two. The question will be how they compare with the other runners-up.

Prost in line for possible return

ADELAIDE (R) — Former four-time world champion Alain Prost has been short-listed as a possible temporary replacement for injured Finnish driver Mika Hakkinen.

McLaren team boss Ron Dennis said on Tuesday.

But Dennis said he was optimistic Hakkinen would recover from head injuries sustained in a high-speed crash last Friday before the start of the 1996 season in March.

"We are working with Alain Prost at the moment and there is a possibility he could become an integral part of our team, some possibility he could race, but that's very, very, premature," Dennis



Alain Prost

told reporters.

but stable condition on Tuesday.

Prost will probably join McLaren as a test driver, Dennis said, adding that the 40-year-old Frenchman could come into contention if Hakkinen is ruled out.

Steelers beat Browns 20-3

PITTSBURGH (R) — Rookie receiver Kordell Stewart took a turn at quarterback and threw a touchdown pass and Ernie Pegram rushed for 112 yards as the Pittsburgh Steelers beat the Cleveland Browns, 20-3, to take control of the AFC Central Division on Monday.

Norm Johnson kicked two field goals and Neil O'Donnell added a fourth-quarter touchdown pass for the Steelers (6-4), who won their third straight game and moved two games in front of Cleveland, Cincinnati and Houston. Pittsburgh is the only team in the division above .500.

The Browns (4-6), just days after the announcement by owner Art Modell that the franchise will move to Baltimore, appeared as flat as they were last week in a 37-10 home loss to Houston. Stewart, who has played mostly at receiver

for the Steelers, surprisingly lined up behind centre with the game scoreless in the second quarter and Pittsburgh at the Cleveland 2.

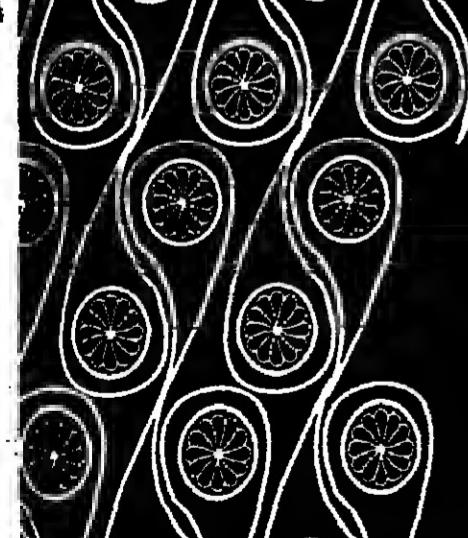
Stewart rolled right and was cut off. With no receivers open, he sprinted back left and looked as if he was going to run, but he pulled up and lofted a pass to Ernie Mills drifting across the back of the end zone.

Stewart, who also caught two passes for 21 yards, picked up a key first down in the fourth quarter when he ran 11 yards an option. Five plays later, O'Donnell hit Yancey Thigpen with a nine-yard scoring toss over cornerback Antonio Langham for a 20-3 lead with 8:47 to play.

The Browns managed just 120 yards, including 10 with no first downs in the second half. Cleveland was 1-of-10 on third-down conversions and was sacked four times.

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PLAZA

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Jene Hackman in
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CONCORD

CONCORD "1"
Sylvester Stallone...in
ASSASSINS
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CONCORD "2"
Adel Imam & Yusra
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Christopher seeks to end deadlock in Bosnia talks

WRIGHT PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher sought Tuesday to break an apparent deadlock in Bosnian peace talks by meeting face to face with Balkan leaders encamped here since Nov. 1.

"These talks could go one way or the other right now," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns told reporters.

"The parties need to make fundamental decisions," notably on the territorial division of Bosnia-Herzegovina, he said.

"U.S. mediators and their 'contact group' counterparts from Britain, France, Germany and Russia were still aiming for a 'comprehensive peace agreement,'" he added.

"At this point, we do not anticipate a halfway agreement or taking a break," Mr. Burns said, adding that talks

might be difficult to restart if a break were called at this stage.

Mr. Christopher was planning to spend a full day in meetings at this mid-western air base with presidents Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia, Franjo Tudjman of Croatia and Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia, who represents the breakaway Bosnian Serbs.

"Today's core issues are territories, Sarajevo, elections and the constitution," a senior State Department official said.

"The Serbs and the Bosnian government are taking irreconcilable positions on territory right now," the New York Times reported Tuesday, quoting an official close to the negotiations.

After three and a half years of war in Bosnia, the warring parties now each control roughly 50 per cent of the country, but linking up their respective zones is proving a

major challenge.

Bosnian Croat radio reported Monday that Croats in the Bosnian delegation had threatened to walk out of the talks if the Serbs refused to hand over control of the Posavina corridor, a narrow strategic area in the north of the country linking the eastern and western part of Serb-held territory.

Mr. Burns acknowledged that the question of the Posavina corridor and establishment of a route to link up the Muslim-held enclave of Gorazde, in eastern Bosnia, with the rest of federal-held territory remained two of the main territorial disputes.

The status of Sarajevo is also at stake.

The Serbs, who control part of the capital and lay siege on the rest of it, are said to have rejected a plan to unify the city along federal lines.

"It is very conceivable that the talks (between Balkan leaders) can go on past this weekend," Mr. Burns said.

Mr. Christopher would be doing his best to push things forward, Mr. Burns earlier said, adding that Balkan leaders have "got to deal with (the) fundamental issues and make the fundamental compromises to get a final peace agreement."

"We have created our diplomatic bosphorus at Wright-Patterson with the intention of convincing the parties that now is the time to make peace," he added.

In Geneva, the U.N. refugee agency Tuesday accused the Muslim-Croat Federation of "ethnic engineering" by carrying out a policy of forced repopulation in northwestern Bosnia.

Much of Bosnia's massive population of displaced Croats and Muslims are being forced to move into territory in northwestern Bosnia newly taken from rebel Serbs, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesman Ron Redmon said.

Two young boys help their family in gathering firewood in the central Bosnian town of Travnik (AFP photo)

Thousands celebrate Women's Day in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Thousands of women gathered at a square in Tehran on Tuesday to celebrate "Women's Day" in Iran as President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani urged them to work to achieve equal status with men.

The Women's Day, which is also "Mother's Day" in Iran, falls on the birthday of the Prophet Mohammad's daughter, Fatima Zahra who is highly revered by Shi'ite Muslims as a symbol of courage and virtue.

The women, clad in the black chador and wearing colourful headbands inscribed with Fatima's name or her various titles, sat peacefully and in a festive mood around a 100-metre tower in the middle of Azadi Square.

Choirs of young girls performed religious songs and speeches were delivered by women officials on the "improved lot of Iranian women" after the 1979 Islamic revolution.

In an acrobatic show, a female member of the volunteer Basij Islamic militia, fully dressed in a black chador, clambered down the Azadi tower with a rope.

A U.S.-made C-130 plane, piloted by a woman, also streaked over the square and landed in a nearby airfield.

Speaking to the crowd, Mr. Rafsanjani referred to the performances "normally reserved for men as a proof of the opportunities provided

for women in Iran and the extent of Muslim women's abilities."

He said the revolution which toppled the pro-Western Shah had "saved women from the threat of immoral" Western influences and guided them on the path "to real" progress and a meritorious status."

"We should take good points from the West with respect to women — like equal opportunities for education, work, etc. — and reject the bad ones, such as corruption and moral laxness," the president said urging women to "take advantage of the opportunities."

He said all of the girls in Iran were being provided with schooling, except for a "few in the Sunni-Muslim community," which is a minority in Iran and often refuses to send its girls to school on religious grounds.

"When it comes to progress, Islam has left the road open for women. But when it comes to promiscuity, our religion is opposed to it."

Despite certain limitations imposed on women after the revolution — such as the obligatory veil and forbidding them from seeking careers in singing and as a judge, Iranian women have had more educational and professional opportunities.

Women account for nearly half of the around one million university students and 35 per cent of the government employees.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Egypt arrests 62 Brotherhood students

CAIRO (AFP) — Police have arrested 62 students accused of leading demonstrations calling for the overthrow of the Egyptian government, a judicial source said Tuesday.

"These demonstrations are part of actions by the banned Muslim Brotherhood aiming to incite the masses and overthrow the government in power," the source said. The arrests were made over the past few days after demonstrations drew thousands of Muslim students at the universities of Cairo, Alexandria and Zagazig. The demonstrators were protesting against the military court trial of 81 Brotherhood members as well as the ban on dozens of Muslim fundamentalist students wanting to run in university elections.

The 62 students are accused of having "30,000 pamphlets inciting hate against the government and for provoking their colleagues." The Brotherhood, banned since 1954 but tolerated by the government as a religious organisation since the 1970s, has accused the government of arresting scores of its members in a recent crackdown to prevent them from participating in legislative elections on Nov. 29.

Rabin's name wrongly spelt on new signs

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Tel Aviv City hall said Tuesday it would change signs put up at the new Yitzhak Rabin Square because the slain prime minister's name had been wrongly spelt in English. The former Kings of Israel Square was formally renamed on Sunday at a mass memorial in the same place where Mr. Rabin was shot down by a Jewish fanatic on Nov. 4 at a tribute attended by 250,000 people. But Mr. Rabin's family were shocked to see that his surname had been spelt with two "bs" in English alongside his name in Hebrew, which has a very different script.

Man stoned to death in Iran for adultery

TEHRAN (AFP) — A man was stoned to death after being convicted of adultery and committing homosexual acts in western Iran, a newspaper reported Tuesday. Mehdi Barazandeh, a dervish (member of a Muslim religious brotherhood), was executed in a graveyard in the city of Hamedan on Sunday for committing "several acts of adultery and the abominable act of sodomy" with a man, the daily Jonburi Islami said. Under Islamic law, convicted adulterers or homosexuals are buried in earth up to their waist and adulteresses to their armpits before being stoned to death by a crowd. If they manage to free themselves, they escape death. The last such punishment reported was in March 1994.

German police stop Algerian from speaking

BONN (AFP) — German police on Tuesday prevented Rabah Kabir, head of the foreign branch of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), from speaking at a press conference in Bonn. Police allowed him to attend the conference, alongside two leftist Algerian leaders — Socialist Forces Front (FFS) chief Hocine Ait-Ahmed and the representative of a small Trotskyite group, Louis Hanoune — provided he did not speak. Mr. Kabir, 37, lives in Germany in Euskirchen, near Bonn. He has requested political asylum. Authorities are examining his request but have banned him from political activity since March 1994.

'Messenger of God' escapes death sentence

SHARJAH (AFP) — An Iranian who had faced execution for proclaiming himself a "messenger of God" was instead condemned on Tuesday to one year in jail when an Islamic appeals court overturned his death sentence. The court in Sharjah said Hassan Gholam Hussein Dana, 36, who was given the death penalty in August for apostasy, "was not an apostate because he had not renounced Islam." Mr. Dana will be deported after he completes his jail term. His lawyer Abdul Hamid Gharib said the sentence was imposed for "slanderous" the authorities. Sharjah is one of the seven emirates in the United Arab Emirates.



RUINED HOME: Lebanese youth look at the ruins of a house destroyed on Monday in an Israeli air raid in Naameh, about 20 kilometres south of Beirut. A Palestinian group said at least two of its civilian members were killed and eight others were wounded in the attack (AFP photo).

Assad, Musa discuss peace; Khaddam says Syria serious

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa met President Hafez Al Assad in Damascus on Tuesday as Syria reaffirmed its desire for peace talks with Israel.

President spokesman Joubour Kouchi said Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa was present at the meeting at the presidential palace in the Syrian capital.

Mr. Musa, who accompanied President Hosni Mubarak at the funeral of murdered Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Jerusalem last week, told reporters he was carrying a message to Mr. Assad from Mr. Mubarak "as part of the continued consultations between Syria and Egypt."

Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam, in remarks published by the official daily Tisbreem, said Damascus was still committed to peace talks with Israel.

"Despite all this (differences with Israel) Syria is committed to continue the peace process in accordance with the principles on which the process was based," Mr. Khaddam said.

Syria's peace talks with Israel are stalled over the fate of the Golan Heights, seized by Israel in 1967, future ties and security arrangements.

The last round of negotiations was held in Washington

in June when army chiefs of both countries met to discuss security arrangements which would back up a proposed Israeli withdrawal from the Golan.

Mr. Khaddam said Israel's demands for the setting up of an early warning post in the Golan contradicted the principles of security arrangements agreed upon by Syria and Israel in coordination with the United States.

"The Israelis refused to make clear acceptance of withdrawal and insisted on having a presence for themselves (on the Golan) through the warning posts," he said.

Syria wants a full Israeli pullback from the Golan and says security arrangements should be equal and balanced on both sides of the border.

Israel says it will not reveal the extent of a withdrawal until Damascus agrees to establish full normal ties.

Mr. Musa's visit comes before an important tour of the region by U.S. Middle East peace envoy Dennis Ross expected to take place next week.

Mr. Khaddam also accused Israel of wanting to dominate the Middle East and condemned Arabs for "helping the Jewish state achieve this goal."

"Israel is aiming to dominate the region, put its hands on its resources and suppress

Arab nationalism," Mr. Khaddam said in Tisbreem.

"It is disconcerting to see that the Arabs, in participating in the economic summits of Casablanca and Amman, want to facilitate the Israeli goal while it still occupies Arab land and suppresses rights," he said.

Mr. Khaddam also criticised the Palestinians and Jordan for striking peace deals with Israel. "These accords reinforce the Zionist project," he asserted.

"In concluding the Oslo accord (on Palestinian autonomy), Israel received the recognition of its existence, its security, the right to control occupied Palestinian territories and an indirect recognition of Jerusalem as its capital, liquidating the Palestinian cause," he added.

Mr. Khaddam also accused Israel of wanting to push Palestinians into Iraq and seize control of oil fields in Iraq and Arab Gulf states.

"Israel wants to establish a regional order and wants to lead it to place its hands on Iraqi petroleum and take control of oil from Gulf states and wants to install in Iraq Palestinians from Palestine," he said.

"The Zionist movement made the decision during a conference in New York in

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NATO leadership crisis worsens

MADRID (AFP) — The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) search for a new leader was left looking increasingly desperate on Tuesday as France made it clear that the only declared candidate was unacceptable and the European allies struggled to come up with credible alternative names.

"It's a mess," Italian Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli said. "There is enormous confusion."

Speaking at a meeting of the Western European Union, where the succession in the disgraced Willy Claes as NATO secretary-general dominated corridor discussions, Ms. Agnelli admitted: "A candidate accepted by everyone does not exist."

NATO was thrown into disarray on Friday when the United States pressured former Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers to withdraw from the race, after he had

been strongly backed in Europe," Mr. De Charette said.

That left former Danish Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen as the only horse in the race, but he appears to have failed to overcome French objections.

Promised by Danish criticism of its nuclear testing programme in the South Pacific.

"He's a candidate. There are certainly other possibilities," French Foreign Minister Hervé de Charette told AFP on Tuesday when asked to comment on the Dane's bid.

Mr. De Charette also warned that the vacuum at the top of the alliance could seriously affect its functioning as it prepares to send a 60,000-strong peace force to Bosnia to police an eventual peace deal.

"The multinational peace force in Bosnia cannot be realised seriously if there is

not a secretary general," Mr. De Charette said.

NATO ambassadors are this week due to begin putting the finishing touches to the plan for the peace implementation force.

Former British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd was tipped as a potential replacement for Mr. Claes who would have won broad backing in the alliance. But having taken up a lucrative post in the City of London, he is reported to be reluctant to take on the NATO job.

German Defence Minister Volker Ruhe, another widely respected figure, has also declined to apply because of his ambitions in German politics.

Other names mentioned

include two EU commissioners, Hans Van den Broek and Sir Leon Brittan. Both, however, have indicated they are not interested in the job.

Mestiri holds talks with Rabbani

KABUL (AFP) — U.N. envoy Mahmoud Mestiri held talks Tuesday with Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, on brokering a peace pact for war-torn Afghanistan amid growing skepticism here about the success of his mission.

Mr. Mestiri discussed the transfer of power to "other individuals or groups" with Mr. Rabbani, but no progress was made, an official source said.

"The president declared his readiness to transfer power, now it depends whether Mestiri can convince the other groups," a Defence Ministry source said.

Analysts said deadlock continued on the contentious issue as the president has repeatedly offered to stand down on several conditions which the opposition Islamic Taliban movement has roundly rejected.

The black-turbaned "religious students" have been besieging Kabul for the past month in a bid to topple Rabbani's three-year-old administration and impose Islamic law on the whole country.

"The Afghan people have lost all hope and confidence in Mestiri's mission," a Defence Ministry source has

said. "He has prolonged his mission for so long that they have lost confidence and patience in his peace drive."

"In fact, sometimes when he comes here it acts as a signal for more fighting as all sides in the conflict see the U.N. is unable to do anything, so they decide instead to battle for more ground," the source added.

People in the streets of the capital — which is hemmed in on three sides by the frontlines of the Taliban who are attempting to topple the Rabbani government — also lack confidence in the United Nations mission.

Mr. Mestiri left for Islamabad in the late afternoon after only an hour-long stay during which observers here said his reception was "cool."

He did not comment on his talks with Mr. Rabbani before leaving.

Afghan officials and residents are skeptical of the usefulness and results of his nearly two-year-old mission to bring peace to Afghanistan by acting as an intermediary between the warring factions vying for control of the government.

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